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Material Culture and Art in the Star Harbour Region, Eastern Solomon Islands

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Ethnography

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Royal Ontario Museum Sidney M. Mead

Material Culture
and Art in
the Star Harbour
Region,
Eastern Solomon
Islands

Southeast Solomon Islands
Culture History Program —
introduction by R. C. Green

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Southeast Solomon Islands Culture History Program

The Southeast Solomon Islands Culture History Program¹ was developed to answer, through appropriate investigations in an area of Eastern Melanesia, some of the broader historical questions generated by previous research in Polynesia; and to explore and define some of the major prehistoric parameters of a region about which there was little previous knowledge. To achieve these goals an intradisciplinary project in culture history focused on a single region was conceived, rather than an excavation program concerned solely with archaeology and prehistory. The region chosen was the Southeast Solomons, administratively known as the Eastern District of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.

The region selected comprises two main groupings of island: (1) the easternmost islands of the Solomon chain including the large high island of San Cristobal, the neighbouring small raised coral islands of Uki, Santa Ana, Santa Catalina, and the slightly larger and more distant Ulawa; (2) the outer islands of the Eastern District including the high islands of the Santa Cruz group (Nendö, Utupua, Vanikolo), the raised coral islands of the Main Reef group, the atolls of the Outer Reef group, plus the tiny high islands of the Duff group and isolated Anuta. A part of this second group, Tikopia, because of its anthropological fame through intensive long term study by Raymond Firth, was not included. Reasons for selection of the Eastern District of the British Solomons, as advanced in the grant proposals, may be listed:

1. Geographically the region represented one portion of a major areal gap between a series of rapidly developing programs devoted to the investigation of Melanesian prehistory. To the southeast several investigators were or are now conducting wide-ranging programs in the Banks and New Hebrides Groups, while comparable completed and ongoing projects were known from New Caledonia and Fiji.² To the northwest other investigators were working in Buka, Bougainville and the Shortland Islands.³ In New Guinea itself, and to a lesser extent in New Britain, New Ireland, and other adjacent islands, archaeological exploration was well underway, conducted in large measure by archaeologists from the universities and museums of Australia and New Guinea.⁴ But in the gap only limited surveys and excavations had been conducted in the Western District, in Santa Ana, in Guadalcanal and in Bellona.⁵

2. Linguistically and culturally, the Eastern District portion of the gap area was a region of marked diversity in contrast to the larger islands and island groups to the northwest. This made it extremely attractive to investigators concerned not only with the relationships between various cultural and linguistic groups in the region but also with the sources of these groups and their role in Polynesian, Micronesian, or Melanesian prehistory. For example, the populations of San Cristobal, Santa Ana and Santa Catalina all speak closely related languages which belong to the Cristobal-Malaitan subgroup of Eastern Oceanic, a branch of the Eastern Austronesian languages widespread throughout the Pacific.⁶ Other languages of the Cristobal-Malaitan subgroup, more

closely related to Ulawa, are found on the large island of Malaita. On Nendö, the principal island of the Santa Cruz group, and on the Main Reef Islands are a number of populations speaking at least four related non-Austronesian languages. They are thought to be related to other non-Austronesian languages which are widely but thinly distributed from New Britain through the Solomons to Santa Cruz, but not beyond.⁷ On the small high islands of Utupua and Vanikolo there are small populations, each speaking at least three distinct languages, those on Vanikolo being at least distantly related. None on Utupua are as closely related as those on Vanikolo either to each other or to any on Vanikolo.⁸ The Austronesian versus non-Austronesian status of all six is still disputed, though most evidence favours Austronesian. Finally there are the outlier Polynesian speakers of the Outer Reef Islands (Pileni, Nupani, Nukapu, Matena), the Duffs (Taumako) and Anuta.

Culturally, as well as linguistically, Ulawa is more closely tied to Malaita, Uki lies somewhere in between, and Santa Ana and Santa Catalina belong with the Star Harbour part of San Cristobal.⁹ The whole area, together with the Marau Sound portion of Southern Guadalcanal, was bound together by an extensive trade network; chert from Ulawa, metamorphic rock for adzes from Marau Sound and shell from Haununu on San Cristobal are some of the more durable trade items in the system traceable archaeologically.¹⁰ An equally elaborated and much better documented trading network obtained in the outer islands.¹¹ Here extensive contacts have occurred between what were presumably once quite diverse populations, genetically and culturally, as well as linguistically. This has resulted in a higher degree of uniformity in material culture¹² and physical form than may have obtained in the past, though one can list certain cultural and physical differences that tend to follow the major linguistic divisions.

While the late prehistoric and early historic contacts within the two trading networks were many, those between them were few and restricted, so that between the two areas a major water gap of 352 km marked an important linguistic and cultural as well as physical boundary. In this period it appears to have been crossed only periodically by accidental voyages from the Reef Islands to Santa Ana and by occasional drifts ending on San Cristobal or Ulawa.¹³ To cross it regularly, however, required only a navigational ability in open sea travel such as that possessed by the Duff and Outer Reef Islanders and such contacts could have occurred at an earlier date.¹⁴

3. Environmentally and ecologically there was also a fair amount of diversity within the district. The water gap also marks a break in the faunal and floral distributions, this being the first significant stretch of open ocean encountered in moving west from New Guinea. To the west of the boundary the faunal and floral affinities of the eastern Solomons are with New Guinea, though much attenuated; the break to the east of the boundary is much greater than between New Guinea and the Bismarcks or the Bismarcks and the Solomons and closer affinities are with those Pacific islands to the east.¹⁵ In crossing this boundary one also moves from the formations belonging to the volcano-plutonic orogen zone which yield localized ultra-basic and metamorphic rocks or limestones which yield cherts that are all commonly used in stone tools, to islands with

rocks predominantly of the oceanic olivine-basalt association or of uplifted coral.¹⁶ Here the same tools are predominantly in shell.¹⁷

Ecologically the variation in the two areas is considerable, ranging from the larger high islands of San Cristobal and Nendö through Vanikolo and Utupua to the tiny islands of the Duffs and Anuta. Similarly in the raised coral island category the range begins with Ulawa and Uki, goes down to Santa Ana and Lomlom (Main Reef Group) and then to very small islands such as Santa Catalina, Gawa (Main Reef Group), and Tömotu Noi (off Nendö). Finally there are the true atolls found in the Outer Reef Islands. These variations provide a basis for exploring cultural differences related to environmental factors and are particularly important in settlement pattern and agricultural system surveys.

4. This area of the Solomons was the only one to be contacted by all three Spanish expeditions between A.D. 1568 and 1605. As a consequence it possesses some of the earliest ethnographic sketches of local populations of any place in the Oceanic part of the Pacific. Also it was in Graciosa Bay on Nendö Island (Santa Cruz) that the first deliberate settlement by Europeans of an island in Oceania was attempted. Its identification and excavation would be of interest to both the archaeologist and the historian. A background to this and other early European exploration of the Solomons was already available.¹⁸ Unpublished materials of ethnohistoric interest in the records of the British Solomon Island Administration and Melanesian Mission would be readily accessible to those investigators based in New Zealand, as would the extensive collections of Solomon Island materials in the museums of that country.

5. Substantial ethnological studies of San Cristobal, Ulawa, Santa Ana and Santa Catalina afforded a basis for interpreting many of the items which would be recovered from surveys and excavations.¹⁹ They would also permit use of the direct historical approach in establishing continuity between earlier archaeological assemblages and those of the present cultures. A series of publications by Davenport provided similarly useful ethnographic sketches for each of the groups in the outer islands (except Anuta).²⁰ Koch has also recently surveyed the material culture of the Santa Cruz region and in the process summarized the earlier German investigations.²¹ Moreover, there was judged to be ample scope for additional surveys of the material culture, especially if undertaken in conjunction with a program concerned with the culture history of the region. This applied particularly to the Santa Ana-Star Harbour region and it is here that the following paper by S. M. Mead fits into the overall project.

Framework for Field Investigations

The various factors which led to the selection of the Eastern District also dictated the general approaches employed and some of the specific projects undertaken. The formulation of problems for investigation relied on one or more of the following approaches: 1) ecological, focused on within and between group variation resulting from adaptation to different ecological situations; 2) directly historical, oriented to tracing back cultural continuity in unbroken sequences at various localities so as to separate different groups on the basis of their archaeological assemblages, and from them infer an approximate time

for their arrival in the area as well as their probable origin; 3) cultural contact, featuring trade and exchanges between the various groups and the effects these had on cultural uniformity or change, and 4) economic, concerned with the study of the subsistence systems, concentrating on the agricultural, fishing and shellfishing components. Obviously no one of these approaches could be carried out without taking into account the other three, but the focus could be shifted according to the nature of the materials encountered, and all four frameworks were therefore employed. In this way in the direct historical approach the use of historically oriented inquiries in the field of art, design and material culture easily become an adjunct to the archaeological investigations; in the field of trade and cultural exchange, the influence of Spanish or other Early European settlement in the area becomes simply one part of the investigation of cultural contact between the various groups; while in the field of cultural ecology, the results of ethnobotanical investigations or the analysis of archaeological middens form important sources of ecological as well as economic data.

Program Outline

The field research strategy consisted of a preliminary visit in January of 1970 to establish local contacts and ascertain conditions for future work, followed by a reconnaissance survey of the entire district from late May until August of 1970. The reconnaissance allowed the selection of localities for specific projects, the collection of general data on material culture, and the identification of the principal types of archaeological field monuments and subsurface sites.

On this basis various projects were initiated which are listed here along with their investigators and some indication of the type of data collected.

Ethnography of Traditional Material Culture

1. Material Culture Survey of the Santa Ana and Star Harbour Area with special attention to its carvers and their art – S. M. Mead.
2. Manufacture and classification of Uki fishing gear – Michael Kaschko.

Language Investigations for Historical and Comparative Purposes

1. Collection of linguistic materials from the outer islands, especially Utupua and Vanikolo – Christine Cashmore (1971).
2. Collection of lexical material from Anuta – R. C. Green (1971), D. E. Yen.
3. Collection of lexical materials from Taumako – R. C. Green.
4. Folklore and place names in Santa Ana – S. M. Mead (in press).

Ethnohistory and Historical Archaeology

1. Survey and test excavations identifying the A.D.1595 Spanish site of Mendaña in Graciosa Bay, Nendö, Santa Cruz – Jim Allen.
2. Survey and test excavations identifying the A.D.1595 Spanish settlement and related local settlement at Pamua, central San Cristobal – R. C. Green and Michael Kaschko. See Allen and Green (1972) for a report on 1 and 2.
3. Historical outline of European contacts in the Eastern district from the 18th to the early 20th century – Kaye C. Green.

Late Prehistoric to Early Historic Settlement Patterns

1. Survey and excavation of an abandoned historic village inland on Nendö, Santa Cruz – D. E. Yen.
2. Former settlements, field monuments and agricultural systems on Ulawa – Gilbert A. Hendren.
3. Excavation of two late prehistoric settlements on Ulawa and a study of the associated chert adze and flake tool industry – Graeme Ward.
4. Detailed mapping and test excavation of a late prehistoric settlement on Santa Ana – Pamela L. Swadling.
5. Mapping and excavation of a late prehistoric settlement at Namuga, Star Harbour – R. C. Green and Michael Kaschko.
6. Mapping and excavation of a protohistoric ridge-top settlement on Kolombangara – Paul Rosendahl and P. V. Kirch.
7. Excavation of a prehistoric and early historic village at Kahula, Taumako, Duff Islands – R. C. Green.

Excavation of Long Sequences and Early Sites

1. Excavation of a 1000-year sequence ending with the historic period village of Su'ena, Uki – R. C. Green.
2. Additional excavation of early pottery from the Feru rockshelter on Santa Ana initially investigated by Davenport (in press) – R. C. Green.
3. Excavations in three of eight Lapita complex sites, 2500-3000 years old, two in the Main Reef Group and one on Nendö, revealing an extensive early trading network – R. C. Green (in press); Ambrose and Green (1972).
4. Excavations on Anuta revealing early levels with pottery and simple fishhooks – P. V. Kirch and Paul Rosendahl.

Ethnobotanical Investigations

1. Survey and excavation of a wet terrace agricultural system on Kolombangara, Western District – D. E. Yen, P. V. Kirch, Paul Rosendahl.
2. Survey of agricultural systems in the Eastern outer islands – D. E. Yen.
3. Investigation of a subsistence system without cash cropping on Anuta – D. E. Yen.
4. Ethnobotanical identifications of plants described in the A.D. 1595 Spanish accounts of Graciosa Bay – D. E. Yen.
5. Survey and sampling of swamps in the Eastern District to determine suitability for pollen analysis – Jocelyn W. Powell.
6. Pollen sampling and plant collection relevant to interpretation of the most promising swamp sites – Jocelyn W. Powell.
7. Collection of plants and recipes used in custom medical treatment – D. E. Yen aided by various other participants in project.

Summary

The background section on the Southeast Solomon Islands has indicated the potential which led to its selection for an interdisciplinary program in culture history. The framework for the field investigations and the list of projects actually undertaken outlines how that potential was exploited. While much has yet to be done, a fairly successful first stage in our research program has resulted, and

the task now is to make these results known through a series of publications. The present monograph is among the first of several now planned, in active preparation, or in the press, intended — in conjunction with numerous articles — to fulfil that aim. In the meanwhile, Mead has embarked on a second stage of field investigations, a project for additional work on the Spanish sites has been developed and its funding requested, and plans have been made for future work in the Outer Eastern islands.

Notes

1. Supported by the New Zealand Government Captain James Cook Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Grant GS-2977 to the Bernice P. Bishop Museum.
2. Shutler, 1970; Garanger, 1972; L.M. Groube, pers. comm.; Golson 1972.
3. Specht, 1968, 1969; Terrell, 1972; Irwin, 1972.
4. White, 1970.
5. Chikamori, 1967; Davenport, 1968c, in press; Poulsen and Polach, in press.
6. Pawley, in press.
7. Wurm, 1967:35.
8. Cashmore, 1972.
9. Further elaborated in conclusion of the following article by Mead.
10. Codrington, 1891:325; Ivens, 1927:40; Fox ms; following article by Mead.
11. Davenport, 1964a.
12. Koch, 1971.
13. Davenport, 1964b.
14. Lewis, 1972:28-31.
15. Thorne, 1969.
16. Dickinson and Shutler, 1971.
17. Codrington, 1891:16.
18. Kelly, 1965; Jack-Hinton, 1969.
19. Fox, 1924, ms; Ivens, 1927; Bernatzik, 1936.
20. Davenport, 1968a, b, 1969, and in preparation.
21. Koch, 1971.

Material Culture and Art in the Star Harbour Region, Eastern Solomon Islands¹

The Star Harbour region is that geographic area which radiates from Star Harbour itself and includes the southeastern peninsula of San Cristobal, and the islands of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina. The area is recognized as a geographic unit by the Lands and Survey Department in Honiara and their map, identified as D.O.S.8G., defines its limits. As it happens, the area specified is a convenient unit for the study of the culture within it. Material culture, technology and language are common throughout the area but there are particular specializations which characterised the island cultures of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina from the rest of the region and vice versa. For example, the island carvers produced small sacrificial bowls, skull containers in the form of model bonito canoes and ceremonial shields which initiates carried with them onto the raised display platform at the close of the initiation ceremony.² Female body tattooing and facial markings, called *segesege*, were associated mainly with the islands.³

In former times the cultural differences between the islands section and the mainland section were more clearly marked. People now move freely throughout the area, whereas, formerly, there was antagonism which restricted free movement.⁴ They cooperate in ceremonials, in plantation work and in fishing for the Coral Seas Fishing Company. Artists from the islands are frequently commissioned by mainland patrons. Marriages between island and mainland spouses have further helped to knit the village communities together. A medical centre at Namuga is used by all communities in the area. Regular visits by government ships and trading vessels in addition to communication by canoe help to maintain a high degree of cultural homogeneity within the Star Harbour region.

Communities in this area are generally organized into two moieties, each having its own cluster of matrilineal and exogamous clans. The same moiety names are used.⁵ Each clan takes the name of the totem with which it is associated: hence, Garofai (Turtle), Gafe (Crab) and Mwa (Snake) which are some of the clans of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina. Marriages most often occur across moiety lines but it is possible to marry within the moiety except in cases where clans are paired. For example, no marriages can take place between Gafe (Crab) and Garofai (Turtle) of the Amwea moiety, nor between Mwa (Snake) and

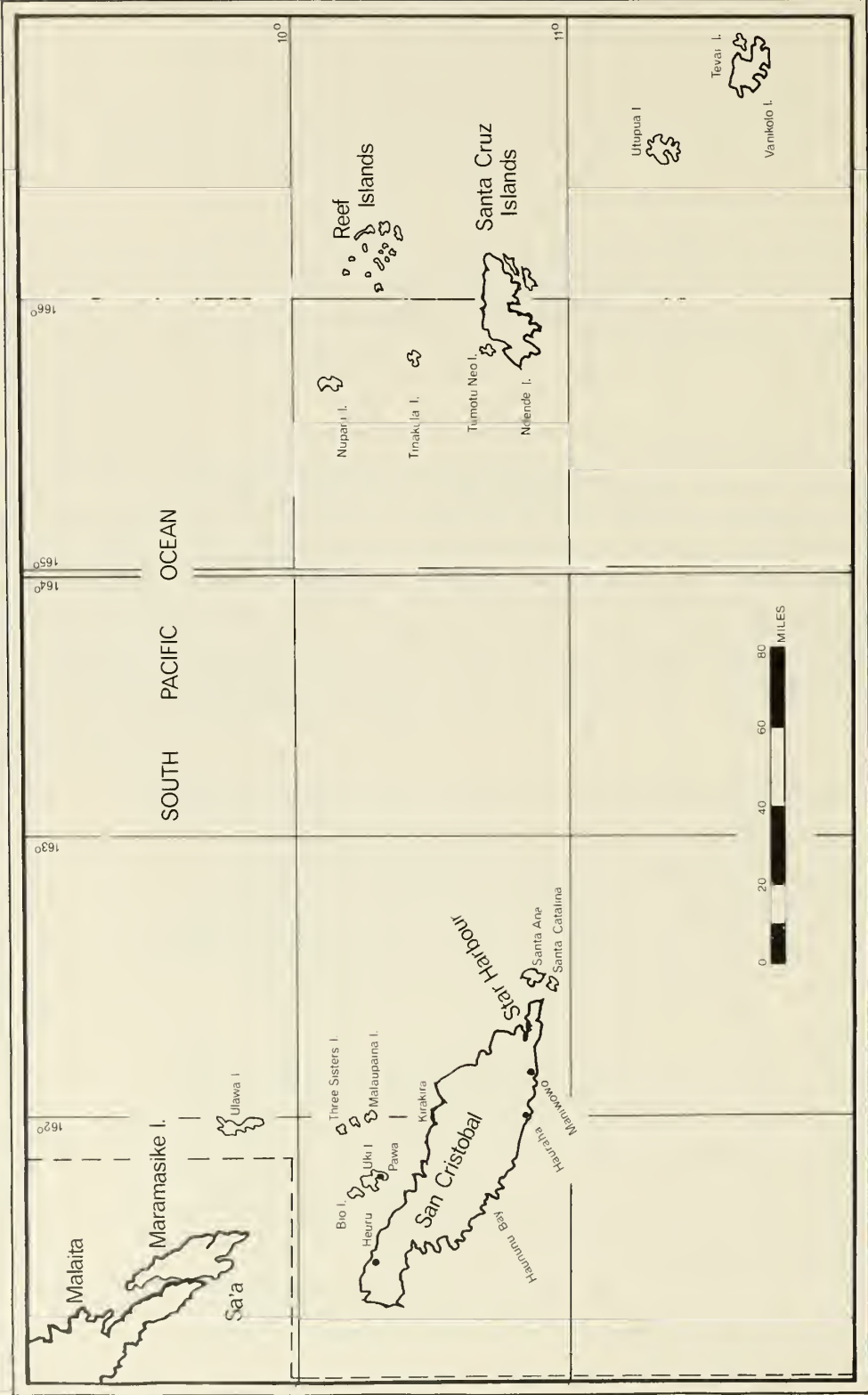
1. Research for this article was undertaken as part of a Bishop Museum Project entitled "An Interdisciplinary Investigation of the Prehistory of the S. E. Solomons and Santa Cruz Islands" led by Dr. Roger Green and Mr. Douglas Yen and funded by the National Science Foundation. The period of fieldwork was from 11 December 1970 to the end of February 1971.

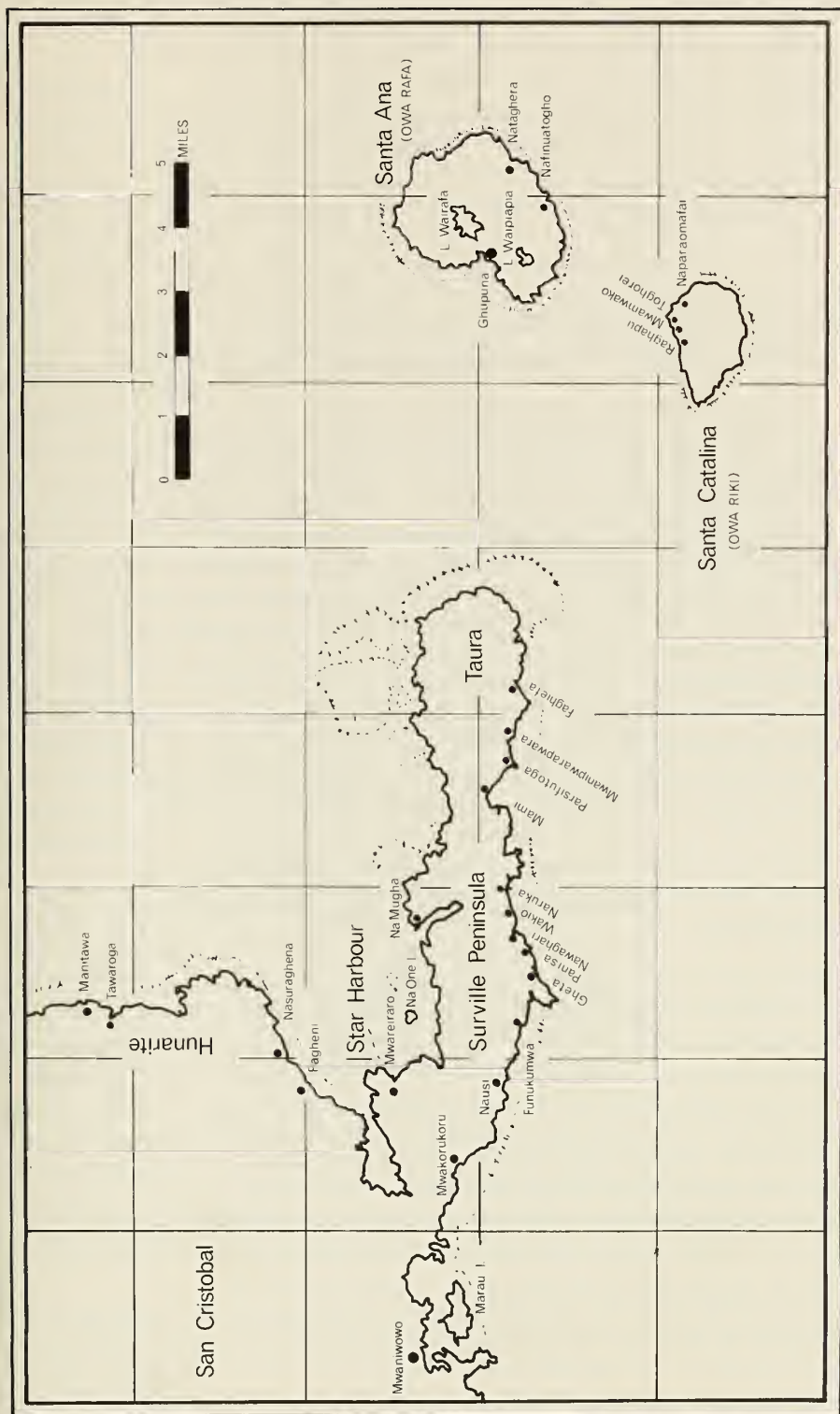
2. Bone containers in the form of sharks or swordfish were used at Sa'a, Maramasike Island (Little Mala), and exposed burial in a canoe was practiced there (Ivens, 1927:209). Shark bone containers were also used at Ulawa (Ibid, 210, 217).

3. *Segesege* and female body tattooing were unique to Santa Ana and Santa Catalina. In Sa'a and Ulawa facial tattoo patterns were pigmented and took a different form (Ivens, 1927:83-5). *Segesege* is unpigmented tattoo.

4. Warriors from Santa Ana and Santa Catalina formerly captured children and slaves from the mainland to sell at Haununu. Victims were chosen from non-chiefly clans while chiefly clans enjoyed immunity from any form of enslavement. Moreover economic competition necessitated the maintenance of very formal relationships.

5. Not only in Star Harbour but almost throughout San Cristobal (Fox, 1925).





Mwaroa of the Atawa moiety. In the latter case one irregular marriage was contracted some twenty years ago and it remains the exception. Land belongs to the clan but a man is permitted to garden in the land of his mother's clan during his lifetime. At his death the garden land reverts to the clan. It was customary for a man at marriage to move off the residential property of his own clan and transfer into the household of his wife's family. There he would stay until he was able to build a separate house and so establish his own household on the property of his wife's clan. Such an arrangement ensured that the wife and her children resided on clan property. The husband was the outsider.

The clans in Santa Ana and Santa Catalina are ranked, the highest social and ritual status being enjoyed by Garofai and Gafe clans who regard themselves not only as the founding clans but also as being descendants of chiefs.⁶ Thus, although all clans have chiefs not all chiefs enjoy the same high social and political position.

The high chiefly position of the Gafe and Garofai is symbolized by the *koukou* or sacred "chief" who ranks as the most sacred personage on the island. The *koukou* is the first born male or female in the most chiefly and sacred genealogical lines (reckoned matrilineally) within the Gafe and Garofai. It was usual for each clan to appoint its own *koukou*, hence there would be a *koukou* on each island. But it was also possible to have one *koukou* represent both clans. This could happen only by agreement between the two clans and after full discussion. Although heirs, or *koukou* elect, are selected by the principle of primogeniture in the matriline it does not necessarily follow that each will in turn succeed to the position of sacred honour. After the death of the officiating *koukou*, in Santa Ana's case a woman, succession to the sacred honour is determined by discussion among the Gafe clansmen. Spokesmen from other clans have traditional rights in making recommendations. It is fully expected that Albert Taaro the son of the present *koukou* of Santa Ana will be granted the honour, when the time comes. It appears that appointment procedures not only allow for participation by other clans but also allows for passing over an heir who might be deemed unsuitable for the honour.

Heirs and officiating *koukou* are not distinguished terminologically. They are all called *koukou*, if the sacred personage is older than the speaker, or *kare koro* (good child), in the case where the title holder is younger than the speaker. The heirs are treated as sacred persons and all go through the ceremonial cycles from birth to adulthood. In the case of males the heir is initiated into the bonito cult and he becomes the leader of his age mates. It is considered a great honour to be initiated with a *koukou*. Sacredness and purity are stressed during the period when the youths are secluded in the custom house. The catching of the first bonito by each initiate is marked by special ritual acts. At the conclusion of the initiation cycle there is a grand display of wealth and fine art as the youths parade up the initiation platform (Mead, 1972b). Gifts are showered upon the spectators by the youths and then there is a huge feast followed by dancing. For such auspicious occasions dance

6. Ranking of clans also occurs at Sa'a and Ulawa (Ivens, 1927).

teams are often brought in from as far away as Ulawa. Ceremonies involving the *koukou* are thus apt to be very important ritually, socially, economically, and politically.

There are differences to be noted between, on the one hand, the two offshore islands and on the other hand the mainland. There is no sacred chief or *koukou* on the mainland. It will be found also that although social organization appears to be the same everywhere there are, in fact, subtle differences between even Santa Ana and Santa Catalina and bigger differences between these two islands and the mainland of San Cristobal. These differences will be clarified when Davenport publishes his material on social organization.

It is pertinent to the cultural situation that prevails in Star Harbour to mention the new political structure which inter-links all parts of the Protectorate into one system. The Protectorate is divided into administrative and political districts. The Star Harbour area is part of the Eastern District which is administered by a District Commissioner. Headquartered at Kirakira, the D.C. is responsible, among other things, for the appointment of Sub-District Headmen. For the Star Harbour area, the Headman is Mr. Alfred Taasi who is a native of Santa Ana and who resides in Gupuna. The political body for the Eastern District is known as the Makira District Council and its members are elected to represent wards within the District. A member of the Council resides in Santa Ana. The political structure of the District thus reaches directly into the villages of the Star Harbour area. One elementary school at Santa Ana is controlled by the Makira Council but everywhere else in the area schools are controlled by the missions—Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, and South Seas Evangelical Church. The religious organizations of the Churches mentioned above also cut across traditional organizations and assume in large measure the responsibility of acculturative education at the elementary and secondary school levels.

Santa Ana and Santa Catalina are small coral islands, relatively low-lying; Santa Ana has a hill on the eastern side. The hill is the top of an ocean mountain peak around which a coral island was formed. In both islands the soil is poor and cultivable land is scarce so that definite limits were placed on the production of yams, *taro* and sweet potato. This in turn placed limits on pig production. In order to survive, therefore, the small island population had to trade with communities on San Cristobal. In traditional times an elaborate trade system existed which linked most of the Eastern District together. The small island populations of Santa Ana, Santa Catalina, The Three Sisters, Uki and Ulawa were particularly active in the trade systems, and all for similar reasons. These trade links have been gradually decreased in area so that today Santa Ana and Santa Catalina are virtually restricted in their economic and social relations of the traditional type to the Star Harbour area.

The purpose of this article is to survey briefly the art forms and major items of the material culture which were observable in the region at the end of 1970 and at the beginning of 1971. As in other parts of Melanesia, this area is undergoing change every year but the various phases of cultural change have not been

documented systematically except for Bernatzik's work (1935, 1936). This survey will provide one phase which will be useful in future studies of change. The cultural situation that prevails in the Star Harbour region is an interesting one to study for several reasons. Firstly, the indigenous religious system has only recently been replaced by Christianity and as yet not everyone has been converted. For example, in Santa Ana two families are still classified as "heathen" and in Santa Catalina there are probably many more individuals who are resisting religious change. But the majority of the population has been converted.

Secondly, the Administration is committed to constructing a political system for the Solomon Island people in preparation for independence. Pride in the indigenous cultures of the Protectorate is being encouraged and no less pride in the Solomon Island man. A spirit of nationalism is gradually developing and this emergent spirit should have some effects on local culture. Thus, while much of the indigenous culture is slipping away one sees evidence of local effort to revive certain aspects of the material culture and associated ceremonials. These efforts are not wholly initiated by the natives themselves. Often there are European individuals or organizations, such as the Catholic Mission, who wield an influence and encourage the population to maintain selected items of the cultural inventory. Art production in the area would almost certainly be threatened were it not for the entrepreneurial activities of two sympathetic Europeans. Encouragement by Government officials is usually not effective because no economic incentive is provided for the producers. Appealing to local pride is not sufficient in itself.

This survey follows some four years after William Davenport's last period of fieldwork in the area which led him to predict that Solomon Island art was living "on borrowed time" and that soon it would be preserved only in museums and private collections (Davenport, 1968:4).⁷ Yet, art is still being produced in the Star Harbour region as this survey will show and, although its nature has changed somewhat, it is still Solomon Island art. A fact of life is that culture always changes, sometimes slowly and sometimes drastically. The intrusive cultural elements which the Solomon Islanders have integrated into their life style and the new directions in which indigenous elements are being developed are not viewed by the people as contaminated foreign elements. They are part and parcel of the present way of Solomon Island living.

First, I shall describe the art and the material culture of the Star Harbour region under various categories. Then, I shall discuss the mechanisms and motivation which on the one hand encourage future change and those which, on the other hand, impede or reverse the process of change. My information is based primarily on data collected in the field.

7. Davenport visited the area in the summer of 1964 and in 1965-66 spent a total of 13 months in the field. Bernatzik did his fieldwork in the 1931-33 period. It is not clear from his publications whether he was in Santa Ana in 1931-2 or 1932-3. Fox was in the area prior to 1925.

Custom Houses

Originally there were three sub-classes of ceremonial house: the *aofa* (custom house),⁸ the *toofi* (club house)⁹ and the *rumatora* (feast house). The most sacred *aofa* are those associated with burial and with the storage of human skulls and bones. Two of these were still standing at Natagera, Santa Ana. The larger one belonging to the Mwa (Snake) clan was in a poor state of repair while the smaller one belonging to the Gafe (Crab) and Garofai (Turtle) clans was in good condition. Both *aofa* were subsequently destroyed by a cyclone in December, 1971.¹⁰ In both custom houses the vertical posts were decorated. The *aofa* of Natagera were the prime pieces of traditional culture in the area, and were the monuments of a religious system now no longer practiced by the majority of the population. I shall describe the contents of the *aofa* later.

Despite the fact that the custom houses at Natagera are associated with particular clans who are said to own them, each house represents a moiety. Traditionally moiety division was reflected in the pairing of custom houses at each village, as at Natagera. This is no longer the case, however. Several villages have only one custom house and several others, including Gupuna and Nafinuatogo, at Santa Ana, have none. As I shall show below some of these villages certainly had custom houses earlier in this century.

There are other *aofa* in the area. For example, there are three at Santa Catalina, but these are relatively plain, contain no skulls and bone containers and house only the bonito canoes which is one of their main functions. The remains of what was once a magnificent *aofa* are still standing at the village of Gheta, on the mainland (Plate 1). Six of the carved posts are still in the ground. There were also *aofa* at the deserted villages of Nausi and Funukumwa, but I was told by Mwakorokoru people that in 1965 a French buyer came and they sold him six of the house posts and after some haggling sold him a seventh post for \$100 (Australian). Four of the posts came from Nausi and three from Funukumwa. After the sale there were four posts left at Funukumwa and three at Nausi (Green, pers. com.). Over time there has been a steady loss in custom houses and decorated posts. When Guppy visited the area towards the end of the 19th century there was a fully decorated *aofa* at Santa Catalina and others at Gupuna, Santa Ana. In 1865 Brenchley (1873:68) saw a richly decorated custom house at Uki and another in the Arosi area. As late as 1931 and 1932 Bernatzik (1935, pl. 24) saw and recorded at Tawaroga a custom house which contained skull caskets of the same kind as present in Natagera.

A relatively new structure, opened in 1965, and constructed as a feast house, stands at Maniwowo on the mainland. Its posts are decorated and it functions now as a canoe house. At the neighbouring village of Mwakorukoru carvers had

8. This type was distributed throughout the Eastern Solomons. In Sa'a and Ulawa it was called *taoha* and was associated with initiation into the bonito cult (Ivens, 1927:34).

9. In Sa'a this type was known as *toohi* and was a reception house for important visitors and was also a chief's residence. In Ulawa the *toohi* was a meeting and sleeping house for elder men and for those men who had already been initiated (Ivens, 1927: 30, 46-7).

10. Private correspondence 14 January 1971 from Mr. B. J. F. Russell, Lands and Surveys Department, Honiara.



Plate 1

One of the custom house posts at Ghetu. It features a mother and child theme. (Field photographs by author, unless otherwise indicated. Negatives in Photographic Archives, University of Auckland.)

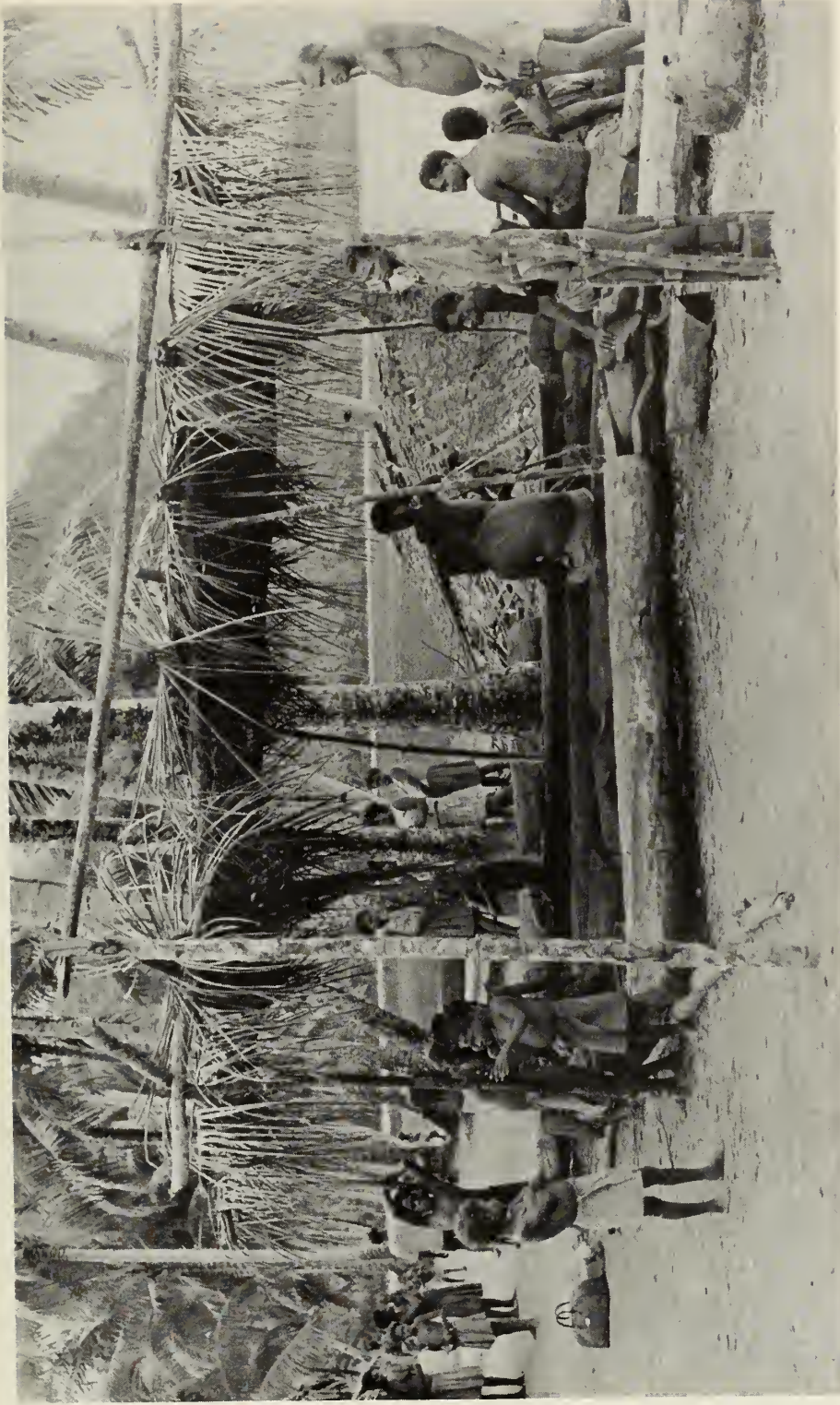


Plate 2
House posts which are being carved for a new custom house at Mwakorukoru. Construction of the house is linked to completion of the memorial canoe shown in Plate 6.

been at work carving posts for a new custom house which was to house the ceremonial canoe they were constructing (Plate 2). I was given to understand that work was to go ahead on both projects despite the fact that their master carver had died a few months prior to my visit. However, Dr. Roger Green revisited the area after I left and found that the shed shown in Plate 2 had been blown down and that the project had, apparently, been abandoned. It is regrettable that the Mwakorukoru efforts at reviving the construction of custom houses had met with local setbacks because it was here and at Maniwowo that signs of revival existed. No such projects were planned anywhere else.

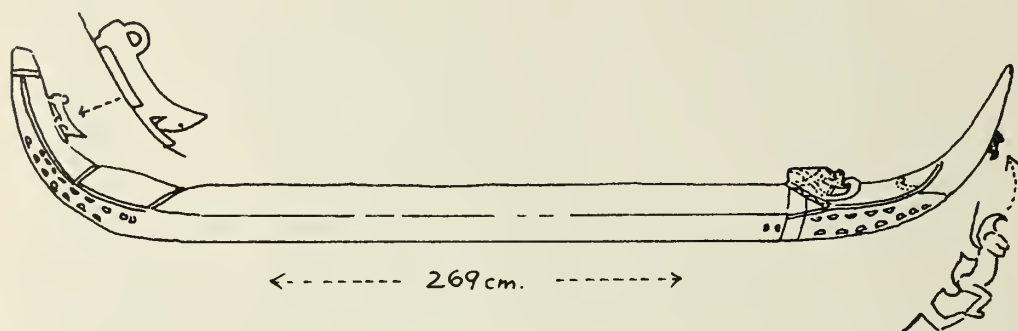


Fig. 1

Againinuni (canoe for man), a container for the bones of Pirinisau who died 24 July 1945, and carved by Faruara of Natagera, Santa Ana. Length 269 cm, depth at centre 24 cm. Shell decorations are of *mweta* (conus ground flat).

Human Bone Containers

In the *aofa* of Natagera are to be found three classes of bone containers. The simplest is the *tarigau*, a container made of *rukaruka* vine¹¹ and plaited in the centre where its circumference is greatest and then closed at either end where the vines are kept together by a plaited band (Fig. 2A). There are seven of these left in the large *aofa*. (Two *tarigau* are partially visible in Plate 4.) Each has a human skull in it. Next is the model bonito canoe, termed *againi-surina-ainuni* (canoe for bones of man) or more simply the *againinuni*¹² (Fig. 1). This is a major art form requiring considerable technical and artistic skill on the part of carvers. There are several of these in both *aofa*. As a matter of interest, in one of the *againinuni* rest the bones of Bernatzik's chief informant on religious matters – the priest Pirinisau, who died in July 24, 1945 (Plate 3).

Third is the *airi*, another major art form, carved in the form of a mythical shark, often with a model canoe on its back and human figure pierced by its jaws (Fig. 2A). The shark with human figure pierced by its jaws is a common but powerful theme in the art of this area. It represents the myth of Karemanua and his brother and symbolizes the transformation of a human ancestor into a powerful deity (Mead, 1972a). On the side of the shark form is a sealed trap door

11. In all cases when the botanical name is not given it is because identifications have not been made.

12. This type of container is not mentioned for other parts of the Eastern Solomons although exposed burial in a canoe is reported for both Sa'a and Ulawa by Ivens.

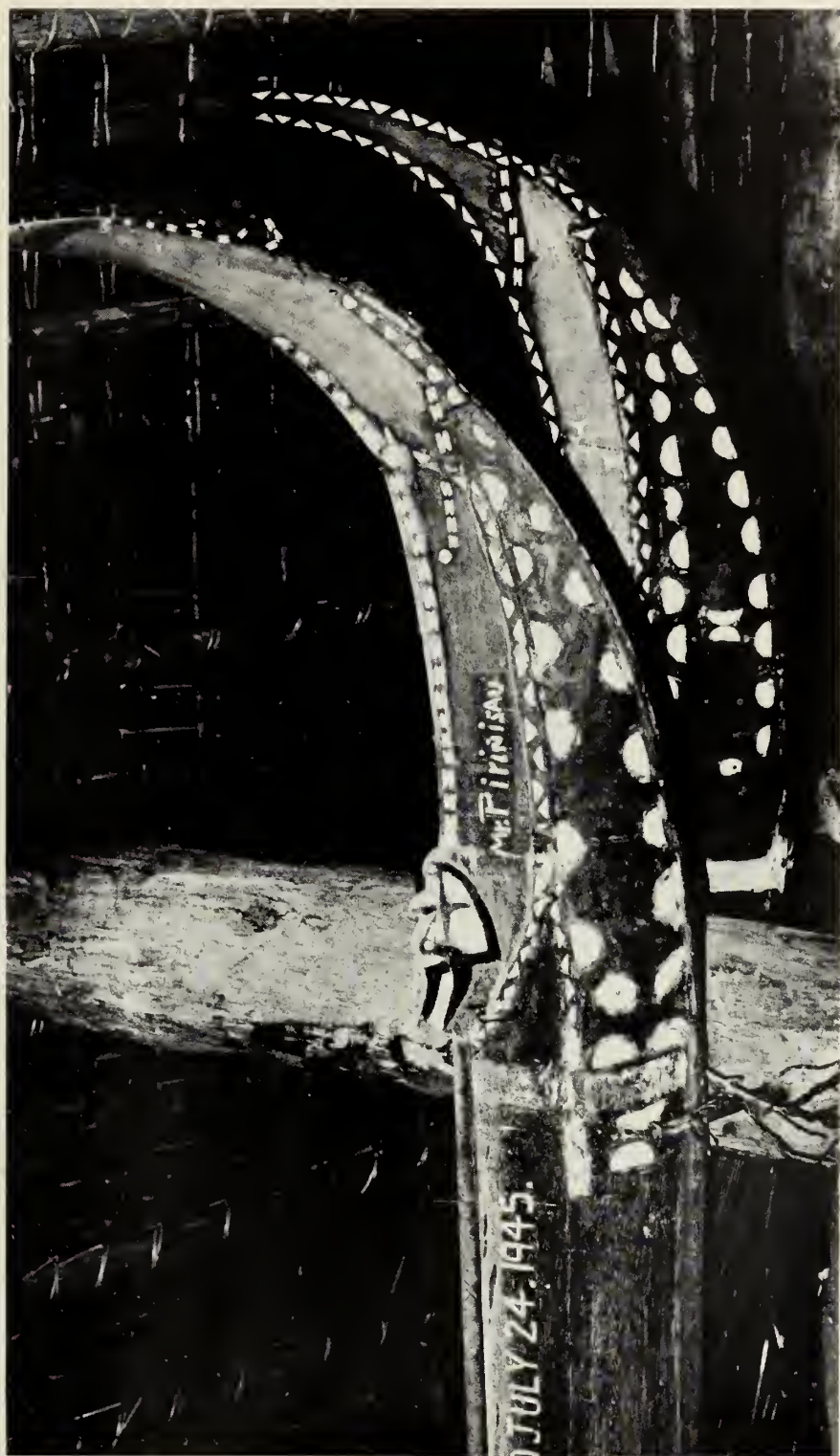


Plate 3

Bone containers in the form of model bonito canoes and called *againinuni*. These two examples are from the Gafe-Garofai custom house at Natagera. In the foreground is the container in which rest the bones of Pirinisau, the Priest, who was Bernatzik's informant in the 1931-3 period.

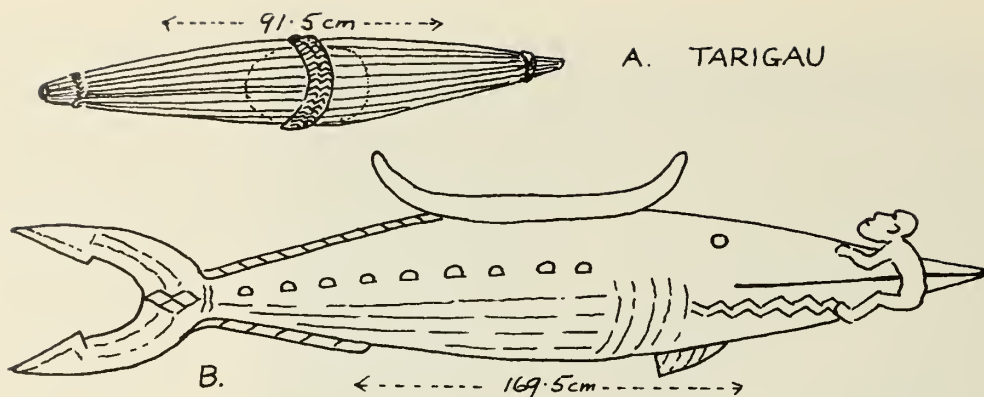


Fig. 2

A A skull container made of vines and called a *tarigau*.

B An *airi* (mythical shark) container which holds the skull of a man called Guna. The lower part of the casket is painted white, black and orange-brown. It was carved by Piringimatawa. The rest of Guna's bones are in a model canoe.

behind which is enclosed a human skull. There were five of these *airi* skull containers¹³ left at Natagera as at 21 January, 1970 (Plate 4).

Once all the proper ceremonials had been carried out and the skull placed into a shark casket, the dead ancestor was transformed into a "living" and powerful spirit.¹⁴ He was worshipped by his relatives and they ate his special food in small individual bowls. Ancestors whose skulls were placed either in *tarigau* or were left exposed on a raised platform inside the custom house were not fully transformed because the full cycle of ceremonials were not undertaken. Thus, they lacked both the social and religious power of skulls placed in shark caskets. None the less, they are important ritual objects as are all objects which are stored in the custom house. It was only at Santa Ana that these traditional containers were still to be seen during the period of fieldwork.

I do not know what remains of the valuable artifacts in the Natagera custom house after the cyclone of December 1971. Plainly, natural disasters can have a devastating effect on culture (Plate 5).

Also at Natagera and kept on a stone shrine on the seaward side of the Mwa *aofa* is an *airi* which is reputed to contain the jawbone of the shark god, Waumauma.¹⁵ The container carved by Piringimatawa is similar to the skull *airi* inside the custom house but the enclosure for the jawbone was recessed into

13. Guppy (1887:70) as noted earlier, saw some of these at Gupuna, and their presence in Tawaroga in 1930-2 is recorded by Bernatzik (1935: pl. 24).

14. The enclosure for the skull is clearly shown in the British Museum specimen illustrated in Cranstone, 1961: pl. 5A. This specimen was collected during the 1890-93 period by H.M.S. *Royalist* which was commanded by Admiral Davis. The museum bought the skull casket in 1904 from a Mr. E. Gerrards. It is 4 ft. 8 in. long. Cranstone, 15 February 1972, private correspondence.

15. The god Waumauma is associated with the now extinct Pagewa (shark) clan of Santa Ana. It is not mentioned by either Ivens or Fox. The folklore associated with Waumauma is described in Mead (1972a).



Plate 4

The skulls of important ancestors who have been transformed into deities are kept in these mythical shark forms. The myth of Karemanua who bit his brother in half and who later changed into a shark god, is depicted in two of the *airi* illustrated here. These examples are from the Gafe-Garofai custom house at Natagera.



Plate 5

The wreckage of the custom house at Natagera after the cyclone of December 1971. Still in position are the model canoe ossuaries and a shark skull container. Below there is a wrecked bonito canoe. Behind the upright posts is an ocean-going canoe, called the *risu-e-rima*. Photo B.S.I.P. Information Services.

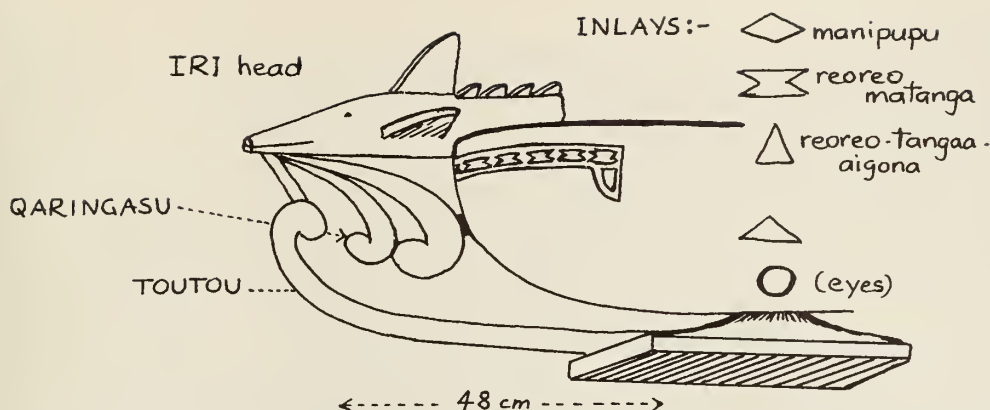


Fig. 3
Decorated end of a personal sacrifice bowl carved by Mana of Gupuna, Santa Ana. It took him 135 hours to complete this bowl which is modelled on the original bowl which he used to sacrifice to his personal spirits or *ataro*. They were Waiwori, a Santa Catalina man who was murdered in his home, and Ganate, a man of the Garofai clan, who belonged to the same generation as Mana's father. Ganate's skull used to be in the *aofa* at Gupuna.

the back of the shark form and not in the side as in skull *airi*. There is a jawbone inside the recess and according to informants this jawbone, washed up on the beach at Natagera after a violent storm in the 1930s, was immediately identified as belonging to the god, Waumauma, and was consequently treated with great reverence. Although his followers have now become Christians, Waumauma is still treated with a great deal of respect and his *airi* is rarely shown to visitors.

Bowls

Domestic bowls which are usually lacking in decoration are still in use in many households but the ceremonial bowls for which Santa Ana and Santa Catalina are renowned are no longer made for religious purposes. Although many functional ceremonial bowls were sold there are still a number of old ones in the large *Mwa aofa* at Natagera. Some from the 1931-3 period are featured by Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 90-95) and others from the 1965-6 period are featured in Davenport (1971: 388-392). The practice was for clan men to deposit their old ceremonial bowls in the custom house. I did not count the number of bowls present in the custom house but there were about 20.¹⁶ Most of these would now be destroyed by the cyclone.

New bowls, some modelled on traditional forms (Fig. 3) and others following more innovative lines, are being made at present but they are for art dealers, private collectors, and tourists. Because these new "traditional" ceremonial bowls are non-functional the carvers are elaborating form, adding more shell-inlay and paying less attention to the actual bowl. The traditional putty for securing the shell-inlay is still widely used and the traditional way of painting the bowls black is still used. The tools used at present are steel adzes, pocket knives, small chisels, and steel files and hacksaw blades for shaping the shell inlays made from nautilus shell.

¹⁶ The earlier Natagera ceremonial bowls featured in Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 90-95) do not appear to differ much from the more recent ones illustrated in Davenport (1971).

Bonito Canoes

In the area the bonito is highly important not only as a source of food but also as a sacred object. The catching of bonito fish was central to the initiation ceremony of youths (Kuper, 1937)¹⁷ and also to the “initiation” of the bonito canoe, the *againiwaiau*, and the memorial bonito canoe, known as the *parufuraikao*. Objects associated with the bonito were usually carefully constructed and artistically decorated. Men who acted as leaders of bonito fishing expeditions were accorded great respect and successful fishermen of bonito built reputations which subsequently brought them great wealth.

Invested as it is with such high ritual importance, the bonito canoe or *againiwaiau* is a major art form and the construction of a well-balanced and aesthetically pleasing canoe was, in traditional times, a test which every master carver was required to pass. It is a plank-built canoe with highly decorated upward-reaching prow and stern pieces (Fig. 4). According to local carvers it is basically the same canoe as that built in Ulawa but the planks are thicker and consequently the vessel is heavier than the Ulawa version.¹⁸

In the Star Harbour region the *againiwaiau* is associated with the island cultures of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina. Formerly, every head of a household would strive to own an *againiwaiau* but today there are only two functioning bonito canoes in Santa Ana and about ten in Santa Catalina. I saw none on the mainland. Since the very foundation of the bonito canoe cult has been undercut by the conversion to Christianity and because this is a single-function canoe its days are numbered. Bonito fish can be caught more efficiently on a nylon line trailing a spinner and trolled behind a dug-out canoe powered by a 30 h.p. Mercury engine.

Other Canoes

Nowhere in the area is there a functioning *parufuraikao*, the memorial bonito canoe mentioned earlier. At Mwakorukoru, however, a new one is being built. Basically it is a larger version of the *againiwaiau* but it is painted black whereas the latter is unpainted (Plate 6). Measuring 7.17 metres the Mwakorukoru canoe is richly decorated with *mweta* shells, made from the base of a conus shell and ground flat, and also with a red-coloured shell known locally as *maamaa* and with pieces of *sao*, or white shell-money. The *mweta* shells were “rescued” from earlier canoes, some were discovered in buried caches and others were purchased at about 24 Australian cents apiece. This valuable shell decoration is no longer manufactured, thus its high value. As in the case of the *againiwaiau*, the technology and lore associated with *parufuraiko* is in danger of being lost, hence the importance of the Mwakorukoru canoe. Unfortunately, this canoe was completely wrecked by the 1971 cyclone.

17. The initiation ceremonies formerly followed in Santa Ana were similar to those reported by Ivens for Sa'a and Ulawa (Ivens, 1927: Ch. VI).

18. Illustrations in Ivens (1927) bear out this contention. In fact, all of the Santa Ana canoes are the same in type, technology and function as those of Ulawa and basically the same types were used also in Malaita. For example see Ivens (1918: plates 2 and 3) where women use plank built canoes and where the sea-going vessel of Malaita resembles closely the *risu-e-rima* of Santa Ana.

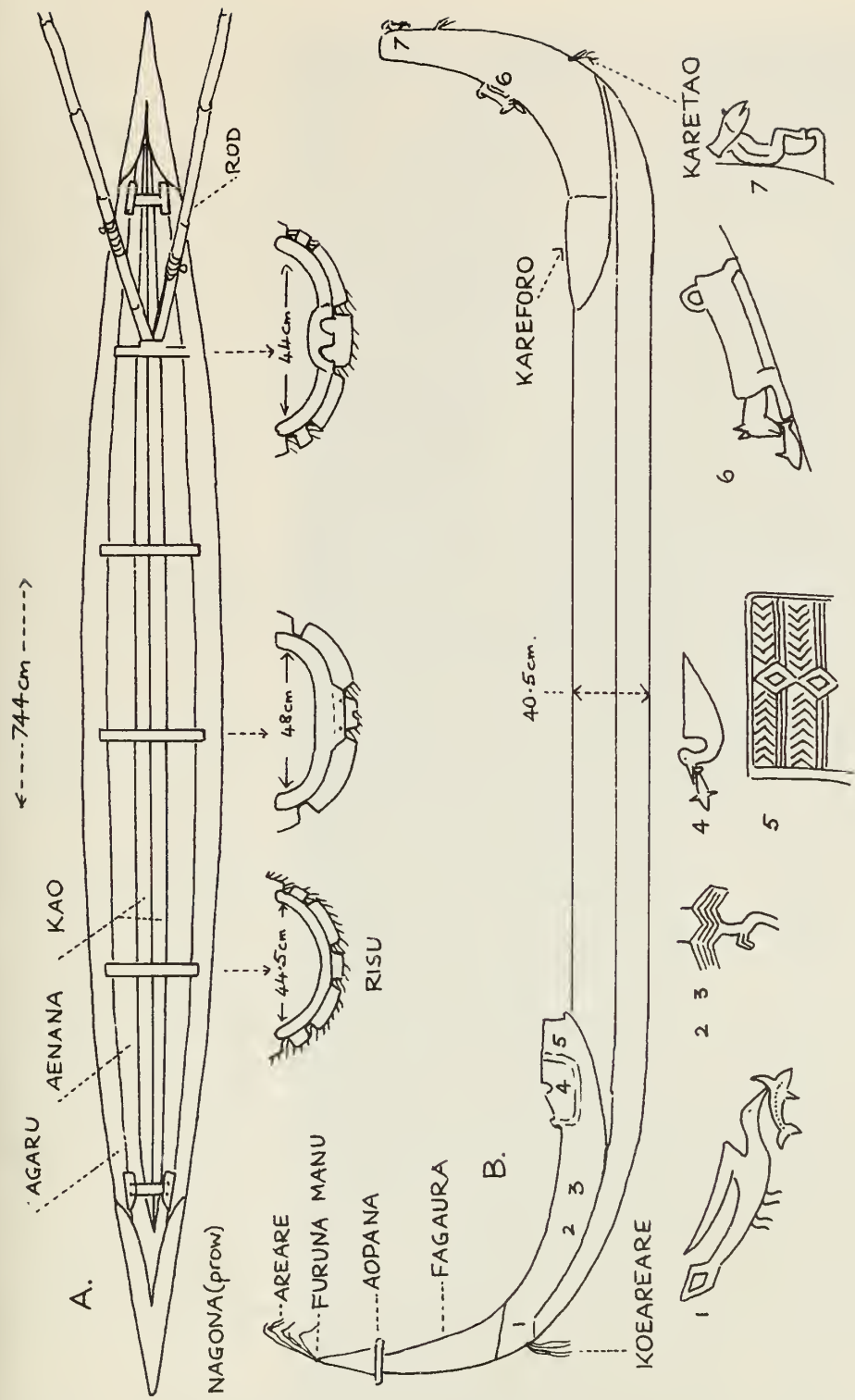


Fig. 4
 Technical details of the bonito canoe (aganiwai) showing its plank and internal rib construction. The ribs known as *risu* are different except for numbers 1 and 3 which are the same. The stern rib is recessed to hold the handles of the stern bamboo rods. The positioning of canoe decorations is indicated by numbers.

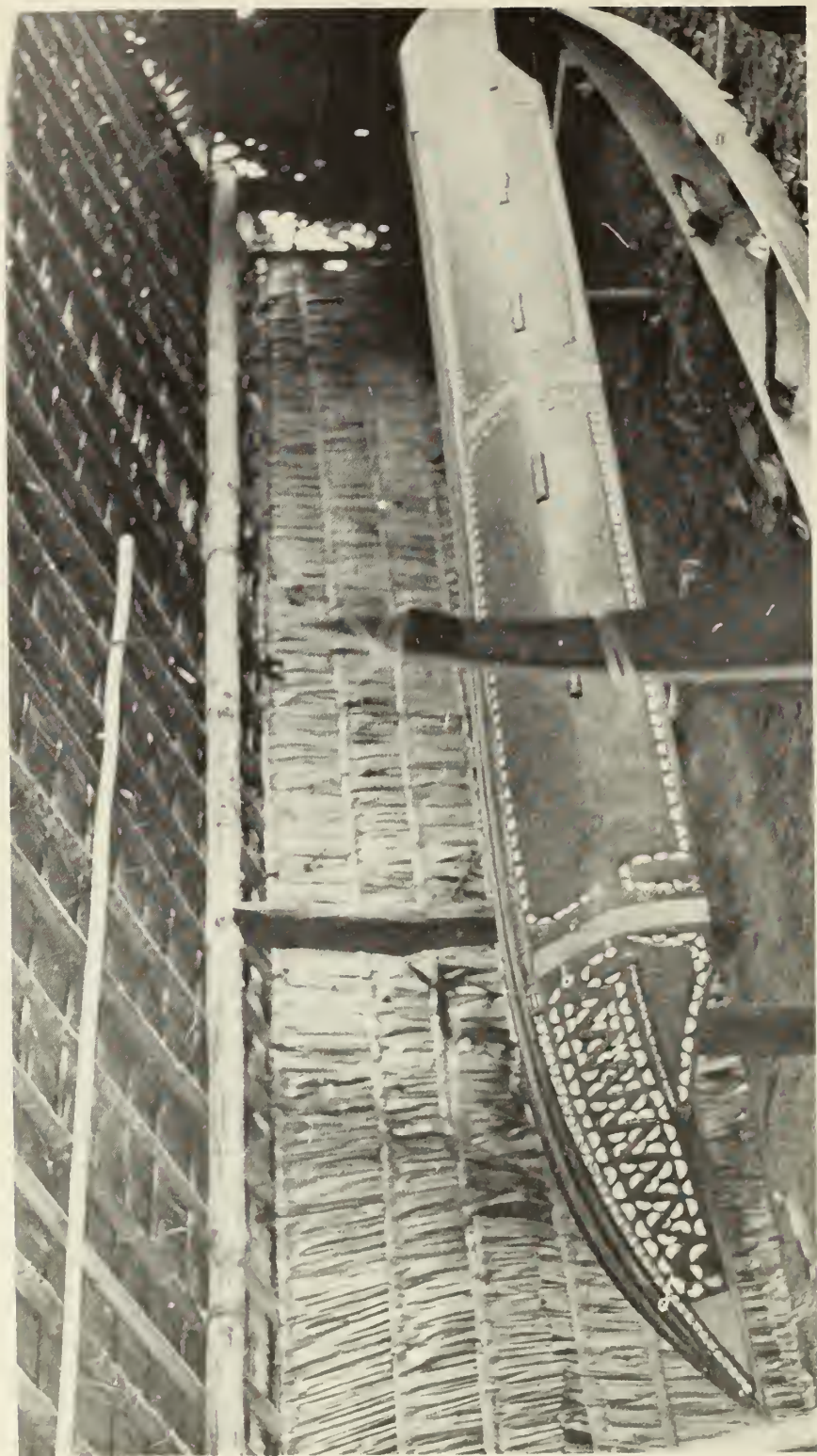


Plate 6

This is the main hull of a memorial bonito canoe (*parufurakaao*) which was under construction at Mwakorukoru. The custom house should, ideally, be completed by the time the canoe is launched and makes its first catch of bonito. Canoe and custom house go together in the commemoration of the dead. This canoe was smashed in the 1971 cyclone.

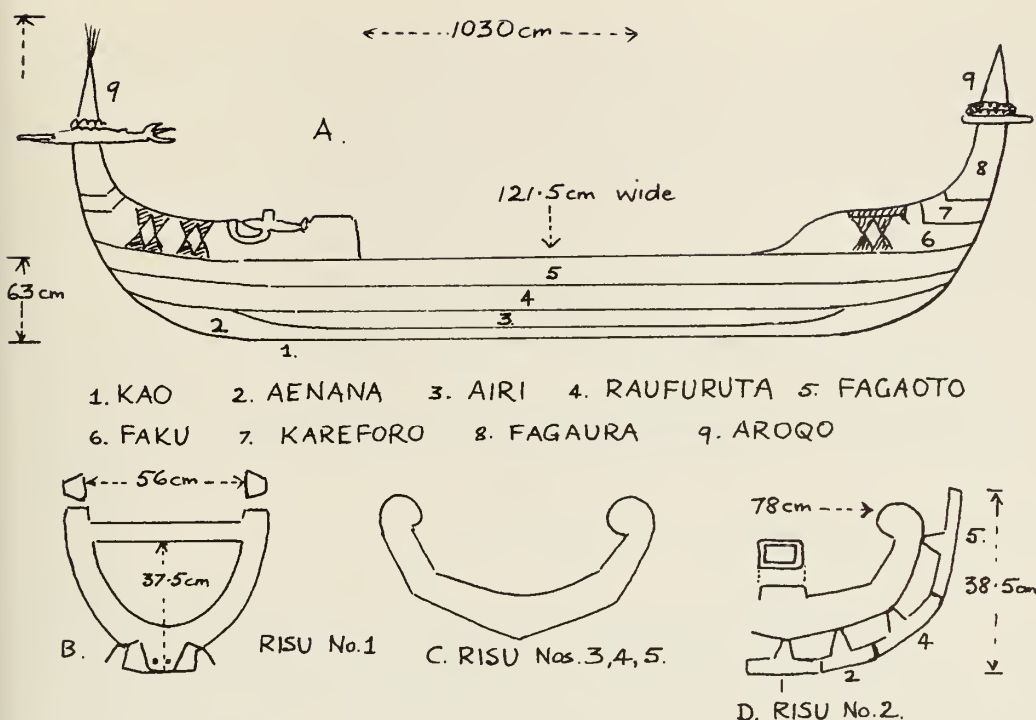


Fig. 5

A sketch of the ocean-going canoe or *risu-e-rima* (five internal ribs) showing side view, names of planks and details of ribs. The details are taken from a canoe built by Waitura and Wilson Suara of Gupuna, Santa Ana.

The long-distance canoe of the area is the large plank-built *risu-e-rima*, a canoe of five internal cross ribs (Fig. 5). It was used traditionally for war, trade and long voyages as far as Ulawa from Santa Ana.

The *risu-e-rima* is essentially the same vessel as the long distance canoe of Ulawa, as a comparison of the frontispiece in Ivens (1927) with illustrations in Fox (1925, fig. 4) and in Bernatzik (1935, pl. 28; 1936, Abb. 28, 29, 30) will show. In the modern period, the same type of canoe was constructed also on the mainland and, in fact, the photographs both in Fox and Bernatzik feature San Cristobal versions of the *risu-e-rima*. Informants claimed that these canoes were formerly manufactured only in Ulawa and in the offshore islands of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina for sale to the mainland.¹⁹ The *risu-e-rima* I saw in Santa Ana appeared to be similar in design and style of decoration to the San Cristobal (or Star Harbour) canoe illustrated by Bernatzik. An earlier example featured by Fox exhibits evidence of greater craftsmanship in the actual construction and a lot more shell-inlay work. The latter feature is absent in the canoe observed by Bernatzik and in those I saw in Santa Ana.

19. Such a claim for Ulawa is supported by Ivens (1927:8) who states that "from time immemorial" canoes built in Ulawa were taken to Sa'a, Uki, and San Cristobal for sale. The claim for Santa Ana is based on interview statements by Santa Ana carvers.

The *risu-e-rima*, once the pride of Star Harbour seamen and warriors, is too large and ungainly a vessel for modern transport needs. It is now classed as obsolescent and it is being phased out of use, as also its smaller version the *quamaworo*, which one informant claimed came originally from Haununu. With it goes an important section of the technology, yet another medium of craftsmanship and decorative art, and another part of the ceremonial life, not to mention a considerable folklore. Formerly, and as late as Bernatzik's visit, a war canoe was taken on a ceremonial tour of display visiting friends and allies. The crew members were feasted and entertained wherever they went and by the end of the maiden voyage would have collected many gifts.²⁰ This fun at the conclusion of a year's work of painstaking construction was something the builders could look forward to.

The popular canoes today are the small family canoes such as the *rara-e-tagai*, a one-man canoe, and the *ra-oru*, the three-man canoe.

Canoe counts for the two large villages on Santa Ana are as follows:

Type of Canoe	Gupuna	Natagera	Total
A. <i>Rara-e-tagai</i>	11	3	14
<i>Ra-oru</i>	31	17	48
B. <i>Againiwaiau</i>	nil	2	2
C. <i>Qaumaworo</i>	2	nil	2
D. <i>Risu-e-rima</i>	2	1	3
E. Dug-outs	12	1	13

All of the indigenous canoe types are built on the plank and internal rib model. The dug-out is an intrusive type introduced from Malaita. It has one great advantage over the plank-and-rib canoe: its design at the stern can be modified easily to take an outboard engine. In Gupuna, where there is a safe harbour, its extra weight is not considered a problem, but in Natagera where there is only a treacherous passageway through the reef line the dug-out is not an ideal craft. The frequencies of 12 dug-outs in Gupuna and three outboard engines, one dug-out in Natagera and none in Santa Catalina reflect these environmental considerations.

However, exposure to modern technology has generated a new desire which is strong among the sea-faring men of the Star Harbour area: a desire for an outboard engine. This new desire will aid further acceptance of the dug-out at the expense of the indigenous plank-and-rib canoe.²¹

20. Bernatzik (1935: 39-43) was present during one such visit. It is worth stressing again that Star Harbour is subject to destructive cyclones. The canoe Bernatzik saw was totally wrecked by a falling tree a few days after it completed its tour of display (*Ibid*). A severe storm felled the tree that wrecked the canoe.

21. This tendency is confirmed in recent letters from Santa Ana which mention that at least two carvers are now working to pay off engines which they ordered through one of the art buyers.

Talking Drums

The mainland portion of the area was once well-known for its “talking drums”.²² Talking drums consist of a set of slit gongs: one large one called a *maramara*, 2.12 metres long, 59 cms. deep and 55 cms. wide, and two or more small slit gongs, called *agoogoo*. I was able to see a set at Maniwowo and observe the way gongs are beaten so as to make it sound as though there is a dialogue between the little gongs and the big deep gong.

An important feature of the *maramara* is that it contains a vibrating tongue, or *susuna*, which projects from one side towards the other, inside the body of the gong. At Maniwowo there was one *maramara* and four small *agoogoo*. Informants claimed that another set was in the village of Naana, then deserted by the community because of a strange epidemic which killed ten of the villagers just before the Christmas of 1970. There are thus only two sets in the entire Star Harbour region.

Susugu Bowls

At important feasts large *susugu* bowls, measuring up to 4.31 metres long and elliptical in shape at the bowl mouth, were necessary to hold the ceremonial *susugu* pudding made from mashed *taro* and highly favoured by the local people. These bowls, usually always well-constructed and decorated, were displayed especially during the public feast at the conclusion of the initiation ceremony (*maraufu*) for youths. Although they were usually designed as large versions of the small ceremonial bowls, occasionally they were made in the shape of a canoe. Bernatzik (1935, pl. 14) showed an Ulawa *susugu* “bowl” which took the form of a full-sized bonito canoe. In Maniwowo, in the Star Harbour area, I saw another shaped like an ocean-going canoe. Very large bowls are now rare but in Santa Ana there were bowls in the village of Gupuna (one large, the rest small), five at Nafinuatogo and 11 at Natagera. There are some at Santa Catalina, the traditional production centre of large *susugu* bowls, but these are gradually being sold to dealers. There are also some on the mainland.²³

Large bowls are decorated with motifs based on the frigate bird and the shark. These are objects that required the expertise of a master carver. Today, Farunga, a master carver of Santa Catalina, specializes in carving them for buyers of the art market (Plate 7).

22. The Bauro district of San Cristobal is renowned for its large slit gongs which were used to send messages but in the Arosi area the same “talking gongs” were used to send messages couched in the language of the Bauro (Fox, 1925:39). Evidently, Bauro is the dispersal point for the talking gongs. Gongs, in sets of three, were used at Sa’a but not in Ulawa. They are not a feature of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina but were brought over from the mainland on special occasions, the last occasion being the last initiation ceremony held in Gupuna in 1943 which is described in Mead, 1972b.

23. These bowls occur throughout San Cristobal. Ivens (1927:47) indicated that they were present in Ulawa but not in Sa’a. A Santa Catalina bowl of the early 1930s is featured in Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 27).



Plate 7
Lawrence Farunga, carver of a new *susugu* bowl, Santa Catalina. Note *iri* head and frigate bird below, on the ends of the bowl and the *marore* (garfish) motif on the side of the bowl.

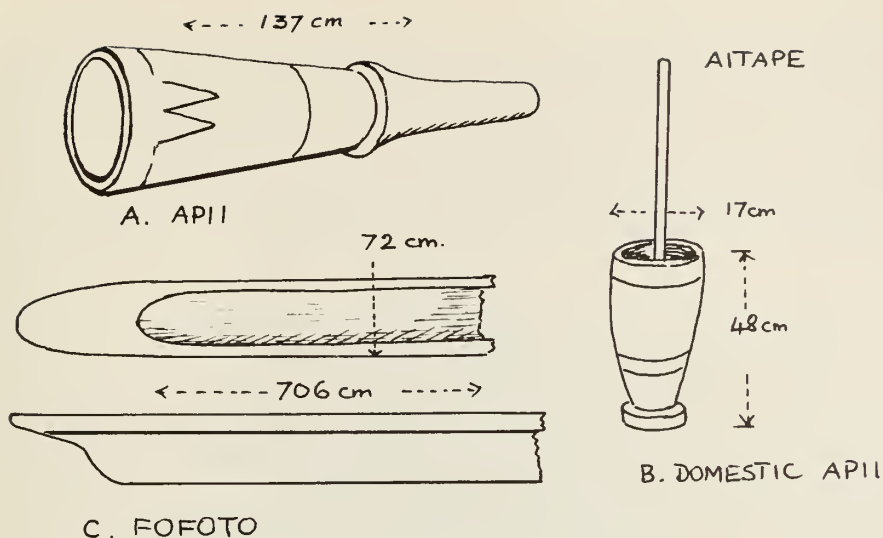


Fig. 6
A. A ceremonial vertical *apii* (taro pudding mixer) seen at Mwakorukoru, where it was lying exposed to the weather.
B. A domestic version of the large ceremonial *apii*.
C. A ceremonial *fofoto* or trough type of pudding mixer. The only one on the area was at Tawaroga.

Pudding Mixers

For ceremonial feasts large mixers in which the *taro* can be pounded are required. There are two types in the area, a vertical one called *apii* and a horizontal one called *fofoto*. According to informants the vertical one is associated mainly with the two islands while the horizontal one, resembling a long trough, is associated with the mainland. It is also important to stress a difference between the very large ceremonial mixers and the very small household versions of both types. Ceremonial mixers are art forms, very carefully fashioned and always decorated with frigate bird motifs.

Of the ceremonial *apii* there are only two examples left on the island of Santa Ana, one in the village of Gupuna and the other at Natagera. On the mainland I saw one at Mwakorukoru and this one was 137 cm long and 45 cm in diameter (Fig. 6A). It was at Tawaroga only that I saw one exceptionally fine *fofoto* measuring 706 cms long, 72 cm wide and 22 cm deep inside (Fig. 6C). As far as I know this was the only traditional type of *fofoto* in the entire area.

Household *apii* are fairly common, there being 21 in Santa Ana. No count was made in other parts of the area. Household *fofoto* are also quite common and they were in evidence everywhere I went. Of domestic *fofoto* there were 24 in Santa Ana and again no count was taken elsewhere in the area.

The pounder made of wood is called an *aitape* (Fig. 6B).

Segesege or Unpigmented Tattoo

The native term, *segesege*, refers to facial markings which are applied to the faces of youths. The markings are scratched and cut into the skin by a sharp-pointed tool made from flying-fox bone and the work is usually done by a carver of established reputation in the case of important families or by a relative in cases where the parents are not sufficiently wealthy to commission a master carver. Bernatzik (1935, pl. 8) features a picture of a youth undergoing *segesege*.

The facial *segesege* consists of two parts, the *qari* placed in the middle of the forehead and the *ositaramata* on either side of the face (Fig. 7). If rushed the artist will apply both parts at one sitting. At Tawaroga I encountered a boy of about eleven years whose *segesege* had been completed only two weeks earlier. The stylized pattern, based mainly on frigate bird motifs, showed up clearly on his face being of a lighter colour than his skin. The right side of his face had been done a month earlier and the pattern was not nearly so clearly defined as the wounds had healed and the scar was beginning to turn into the same colour as his skin. In adulthood the pattern is not obvious and it is necessary for an observer to get within six feet of the subject in order to see it clearly.

In traditional times all young males and females of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina were subjected to the ordeal of *segesege* as it was regarded as a distinctive sign of membership in the island cultures. Nowadays the practice is being neglected in Santa Ana but not in Santa Catalina where it is rare for any young people to escape it. *Segesege* has been adopted by mainland communities so that in one sense more youths are being subjected to *segesege* now than before and over a much wider geographical area. For example, in 1970, Farunga, a master carver from Santa Catalina, applied *segesege* to eight individuals at Santa Catalina, Santa Ana, Naana, Tawaroga, and Pehuru for which he received \$24 worth of white *sao* shell money, \$10 in Australian notes, several twists of tobacco and other small gifts.

As a matter of interest the best return ever received by a *segesege* artist was collected by Reresimae, a master carver of Natagera, Santa Ana, when he did Kamagari, daughter of Aifunaaru of Mwakorukoru. He received one *sao* (white shell money) for the girl to lie down, another *sao* for her to turn, another *sao* for her to get up (thus far a total of \$18), one *aiga* for him to wash his hands, and then 200 big yams, one cooked pig, one basket filled with tobacco, calico and small coins, one *quanamanu* (four flying fox teeth) one *quanaiga* (four porpoise teeth) and one small section of *sao* called a *kawenasao*.

This example makes clear that *segesege* is still very important within the culture and that its practice and method of payment follows local custom. Moreover, it shows that there is still a place within the culture itself for the native artist. He can be commissioned and recompensed for his services in native terms. The traditional exchange system still functions and valuables such as red and white shell money, strings of porpoise teeth, flying fox teeth and dog's teeth continue to be negotiable items.

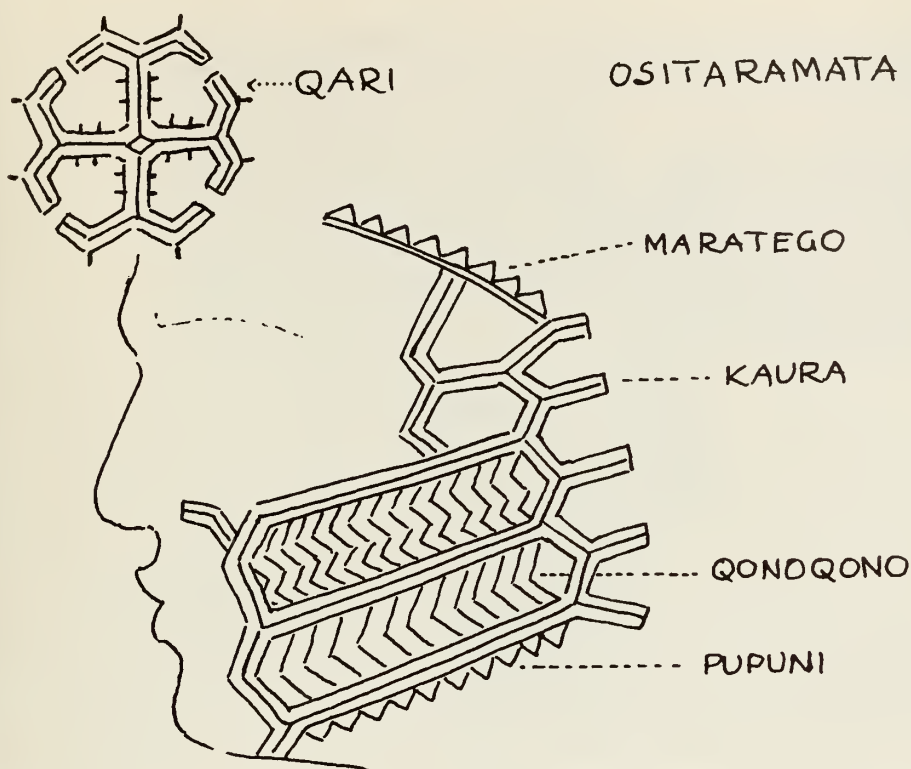


Fig. 7
Segesege or unpigmented tattoo based on a drawing by Farunga of Santa Catalina. Each artist has his own favourite composition which differs from that used by other artists. The top part of facial design goes into the hair area on the side of the head.

Segesege is clearly related to facial marking in Ulawa because the basic motifs used on the face are the same although the arrangement into patterns differs. In each area, however, the central forehead motif is different. The *hoi elite* motif of Sa'a and Ulawa (Ivens, 1927:83) is not used in Santa Ana. Instead the *qari* is used and this motif is identical to the *bwari* (web of the tarantula) of the Arosi area (Fox, 1925:16).²⁴

Tattooing

It was customary for women on Santa Ana and Santa Catalina to be tattooed on the chest, breasts, the stomach across the waist, on the thighs, and across the back and buttocks (Fig. 8). Tattooing is a female prerogative executed by women experts on women subjects. The earliest account of female tattooing was published by Henry Kuper in 1926 and his illustrations and the terms used for patterns are repeated in Bernatzik (1936).

24. It should be stressed that similarities with Sa'a and Ulawa are confined to the motifs used on the side of the face. The central forehead pattern of Star Harbour is related to a similar tattoo pattern used in the Arosi area. Another difference to be noted is that pigment is added in Sa'a and Ulawa. The cover illustration of Hogbin's (1964) book on the Kaoka speakers of Guadalcanal suggests that some form of segesege was also practised on Guadalcanal, but the motifs differed from those used at Santa Ana, Ulawa and Sa'a.



Plate 8

Katorona, a woman of Santa Catalina, has been partly tattooed. Chest and breast tattoo patterns are yet to be added.

When dry the sap of the *maramara-angari* or the *agatoga* is burnt, the soot is collected and mixed with the juice crushed from a *gura* fruit. This ink is punctured into the skin with a two-pronged chisel made of frigate bird bone. The chisel is tapped about one tenth of an inch into the skin with a slender mallet made of *magamage*.

It is claimed by female informants that there were three main reasons why women were tattooed: one, to make them beautiful; two, as a sign that they belong to Santa Ana or Santa Catalina; and, three, to commemorate some important event in which their male relatives, excepting male siblings, have participated, for example, a dancing trip to Ulawa. Women from San Cristobal or Ulawa were sometimes tattooed but only when they had been guests on the islands. Thus, they were tattooed as a special honour.

Santa Ana tattoo experts were Kamarata of Natagera, Kaito also of Natagera, Kapawa and Kanana (younger sister of Kaito) of Gupuna. They are all dead, Kanana, the last to die, passing away as recently as 1970. She was regarded as the number one tattooer of Santa Ana and she is credited with tattooing eight women from the Arosi district (northern half of San Cristobal), ten from villages around Star Harbour, 14 from Ulawa, four from the Bauro district of San Cristobal and 27 women from Santa Ana. Santa Catalina has its own experts.

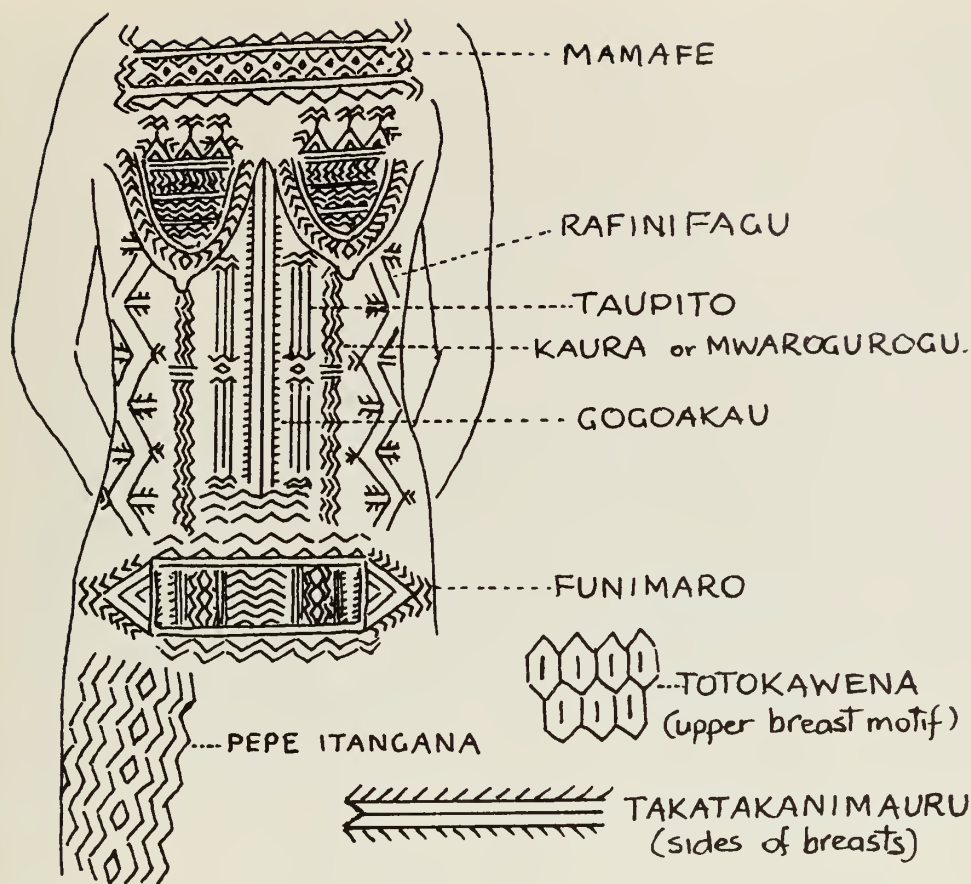


Fig. 8
Female tattoo patterns. Illustrated are the front patterns which are intended to link with the patterns on the back. There are no women nowadays with the full complement of tattoo. Based on drawings by Katie, daughter of Sipa and C. Kuper, Santa Ana.

The position regarding tattooing is that most women 40 years old and upwards were tattooed. Some women in their late twenties and thirties have some tattoo but below this age there is no tattooing present (Plate 8). There is no one in either island who has the full complement of body tattoo as illustrated by Kuper but there are several who have frontal tattoo only. Even at the time Kuper wrote his article completely tattooed women were rare. He counted six women on the two islands in 1926. The photographic record of an initiation ceremony held in Gupuna 1943, (Mead, 1972b), copies of which are in the Photographic Archives of the Auckland Institute and Museum, show at least one woman who appeared to be fully tattooed. Now there are none.

Men were not usually tattooed as a convention except that priests (*mwane-apuna*) of distinction received a tattoo sign known as *rorofa* and this took the form of two small fish, one on either side of the nose (Kuper, 1926, fig. 4). I did not notice any man with this sign although I did observe that some men had tattooed marks on their chests and arms. However, according to informants these marks were simply doodles.

Although tattooing was begun as early as 13 to 14 years old it could never be completed until a woman's breasts had fallen. Only then could the breasts be tattooed and the frontal pattern, consisting mainly of frigate bird motifs, completed. Thus female tattooing is associated mainly with older women rather than younger. The change to Christianity and the adoption of clothing appropriate to that religion have probably brought the curtain down on female tattooing. This facet of Star Harbour art needs to be studied carefully now before the present examples take the art with them to the grave.

The Costume System

As in many other Oceanic cultures there were two types of costume in this area: minimal costume, used for everyday wear, and maximal costume, used for special occasions. Minimal costume consisted of no clothing at all for uninitiated boys, a waist string for young girls, a waist string and pubic fringe for adult women and an apron suspended from a waist string or band for adult males. Examples of minimal costume for the different age groups are illustrated in Bernatzik's two books, indicating that the old system was still in use during the 1931-33 period when Bernatzik was in the area. Nowadays, most people have adopted as minimum costume shorts for males and skirts and white brassiere for the younger women. Only a few of the old people at Santa Catalina and one person at Natagera still follow the minimum costume of traditional times (Plate 9).

It is worth noting that female body tattooing is part of the traditional costume system. The only garment worn, the pubic fringe, did not interfere unduly with full public display of the tattoo patterns. In a sense the full complement of front and back tattoo patterns functioned as a permanent decorated "garment" to "dress" and ornament the human body. Thus, a fully tattooed woman is not really "naked," a point which is emphasized by having her arm and ankle band decorations permanently tattooed on.

The traditional maximal costume consisted of quantities of shell-money, teeth and shell ornaments which were added to the minimal costume. Many of these items were common to both sexes except that the crescent-shaped breast ornament, a wide belt of shell-money and arm rings of fossilized clam shell were part of male costume and the nose ornament known as *qangoqango* was part of female costume. Examples of traditional costume are well illustrated in Bernatzik's two books. When males took part in dancing or when they performed the traditional warrior challenge they wore, in addition to the items mentioned above, a dancing skirt fashioned from coconut leaves and either a headband of shells or of coconut leaves. Examples of male dancing costume are also illustrated in Bernatzik.

Modern maximal costume consists of shorts and shirts for the men and frocks for women. Such costume is worn on Sundays for church services and whenever the inhabitants visit the administrative centres in Kirakira and Honiara. The more acculturated youth who work in Honiara dress the same way as the urban dwellers of Honiara. All over the Star Harbour area the new costume is highly visible while traditional maximal costume items are rarely to be seen.



Plate 9

Two elders of Santa Catalina, More (left) and Mwaretau (right) still wear the traditional type of loincloth. They are here offering sacrifice bowls for sale to the Coral Seas Fishing Company.

However, most families have collections (usually hidden away in wooden chests) of traditional costume items, such as: (1) shell armbands of fossilized clam shell, called *gima*,²⁵ (2) ankle bands made of money, black *furu* seeds, and the fruit of the *tete* tree, (3) cowrie shell decoration, called *qaga*, and incorporating some shell-money, some porpoise teeth and *tete* nuts and usually worn against the tibia bone of the leg, (4) a belt of 13 strings of money which are kept apart by tortoise shell spreaders, and called *fogofogo*, (5) a belt of flying fox, porpoise and dog teeth in association with shell-money and called a *kafa*, (6) a bandolier of six to eight strings of shell-money, with a central cluster of porpoise teeth and called a *mamafe* (worn across the breast in pairs), (7) a necklace of six strings of shell-money with porpoise and flying fox teeth, called *airigape*, (8) a necklace of 400 teeth of the flying fox, called a *roke*, (9) a headband of cowrie shells called a *taraipuri*, (10) clam-shell ear plug decorated with shell-money and flying fox teeth, called *aifo*,²⁶ (11) a woven wristband made of lawyer cane and containing no shell-money, called a *qato*, (12) a wristband of shell-money and smaller than an ankle band; called *ngaungau-ni-rima*, (13) a slender armband decorated with frigate bird motifs and called *raqub*, (14) a nose ornament made of turtle shell and fixed into a hole pierced through

25. The *gima* is distributed as far as Ulawa (Ivens, 1927: Pl. VI). *Gima* are illustrated in Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 72, 74, 75, 77, 81, 83) and in his Abb. 120 a youth from Santa Ana is shown wearing one on his left arm.

26. The same ornament occurs in Ulawa where it is called *eho* (Ivens, 1927, Pl. V).

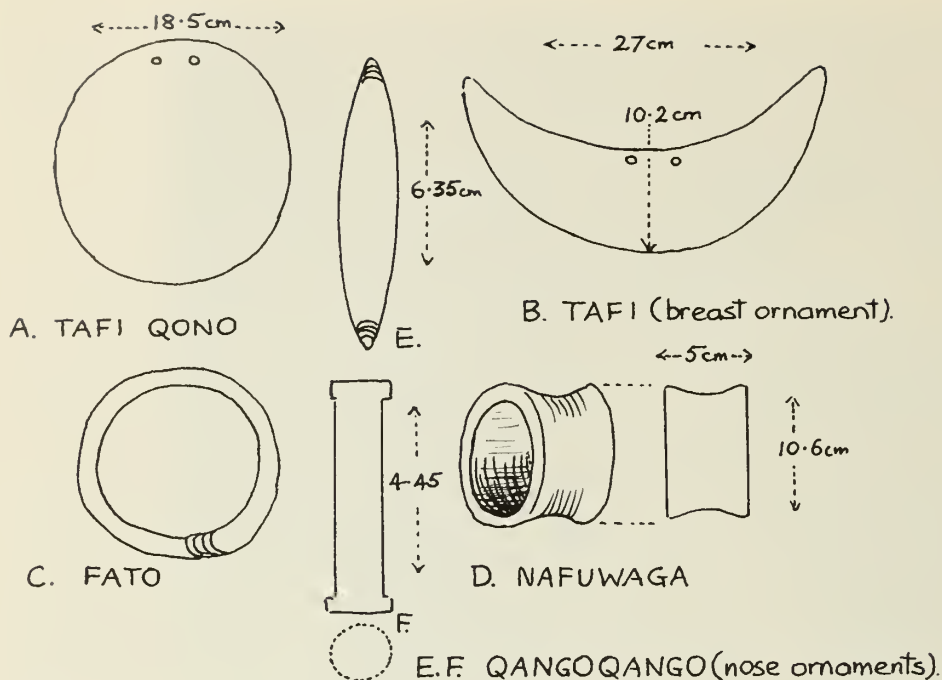


Fig. 9

Ornaments of the Star Harbour area.

A. The *tafi qono*, a circular breast ornament of pearl shell with no turtle shell decorations.

B. The *tafi* breast ornament made of pearl shell and used all over the Solomon Islands.

C. *Fato* arming made of trochus shell. Outside diameter 9.50 cm, thickness variable from .50 cm to 1.00 cm.

D. *Nafuwaga*, armband of clamshell and used by warriors in close combat. A more devastating variety is known as *qoqo raworawo* and it is like wearing a wheel on the arm. Greatest diameter is 15.5 cm, inside diameter is 8.2 cm and the clamshell is uniformly 1.00 cm thick.

E. *Qangoqango*, a nose ornament of clamshell, round in section and tapering at the ends. It is worn through the septum of the nose.

F. A reel-like nose ornament, also classified as a *qangoqango*, and worn in the septum. This one has the advantage of being able to hold additional ornaments on the ends.

the point of the nose; called a *mara-kaura*, (15) a nose ornament of clam shell which is put through the septum of the nose; called a *qangoqango*, (16) a nose ornament made in either turtle shell, in which case the term *tamono* applies, or in clam shell for which the term *tamono-arafa* (nose ornament for chiefs), applies, (17) four strings of white shell-money with a short strip of red shell-money at bottom centre, called *sao*, and functioning both as costume and as an exchange item, (18) white shell-money arranged so that there is a strip of red money on either side when the strings are hung by the knotted end; called *mwera*, and (19) four strings of red shell-money which is four times as valuable as *sao* (\$24 Australian), called *faga* and worn like a bandolier. To this list must be added the pearl shell breast ornament known as *tafi* in this area (Fig. 9).²⁷

27. When the Santa Ana ornaments are compared with those of Ulawa featured by Ivens (1927: pl. v, vi, xii, p. 143 and illustration opposite p. 148) it will be seen that they are identical. I assume that Sa'a costume is similar.



Plate 10

A *marautu* boy, 14 years old, going through the initiation ceremonies held in Gupuna, Santa Ana in 1943. This rare photograph, taken by the United States Army, shows the boy dressed in costume jewelry, a small basket over his shoulder, and holding the distinctive *maramaraitapa* initiation shield. The frigate bird is the dominant motif in these shields. The boys are about to go up onto the initiation platform during the final day of their initiation. Photo courtesy of Auckland Museum and Institute.

Not every family owns a complete collection but formerly when the young men were initiated (Plate 10) it was necessary for each initiate to don full ceremonial dress which required most of the items listed.²⁸ Nowadays it seems to be the women who occasionally wear such costume. Towards the end of my fieldwork period at Santa Ana I photographed six Gupuna women who featured what

²⁸ The Major Merrill Moore photographs in the Auckland Museum show that a Santa Ana initiate in 1943 was costumed almost identically with an Ulawa youth of 1925, the main difference being that a Santa Ana youth held an initiation shield and not a spear as in Ulawa.

costume jewelry they owned. When put together the items they wore represent considerable native wealth. However, only six women were willing to come forward to be photographed so that it was impossible to determine, in this one village, how many costume items were present. A census of costume items would be very difficult in this area because such items are more than costume pieces; they represent, in fact, each family's personal bank account. The impression I gained was that there was a great quantity of costume wealth both on Santa Ana and Santa Catalina.

Plaiting and Weaving

When Solomon Islanders travel they usually carry, not a suitcase, but rather a bed roll, consisting of sleeping mat and blanket. The ubiquitous sleeping mat, however, is purchased from the Chinese trader and is not a locally made product. But the women of Santa Ana are quite capable of plaiting their own *qana*, or sleeping mat, from the leaves of the *kakaru* plant. To prove the point, two women demonstrated the techniques for me. The women also plait fans, sun shades and baskets. The following baskets are still common on Santa Ana.

1. *penapena*, a shallow dishlike basket made from four sections of coconut leaf used for picking up rubbish and sometimes for suspending food,
2. *garao*, a relatively deep basket made from four sections of coconut leaf and used for carrying coconuts and yams,
3. *togi*, a basket, bowl-like in shape, made from four sections of coconut leaf, and used for carrying or suspending cooked food.
4. *togi-qauna-qo* (pig's head basket), a triangular shaped basket made from two sections of six leaves each, and used for storing cooked food and eating utensils made of coconut shell.
5. *anganimamu*, a fisherman's basket, made of two sections of coconut leaf, the midrib forming the top, each section plaited separately and then joined together and finally finished at the bottom, and used by men when fishing and by women for carrying sweet potato. (See Plate 13.)
6. *angatamutamu*, a small basket used like a purse for carrying betel nut paraphernalia — *amasi* leaves, nut, lime, and pocket knife — and square at the base.
7. *faini*, a general class of circular baskets made of finely split coconut softened in the flames of a fire before being worked, and reinforced at the base with three layers of plaiting to protect a woman's head when carrying loads of garden produce (Plate 11). A drawing of a *faini* is shown in Bernatzik (1936:80, T.40)
8. *faini-maremarega*, an especially fine *faini* which qualifies as an art form distinctive of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina women. They also make an even more sophisticated variety of *faini*, known as the *faini-iana-o-karitaaru*, that is, Karitaaru's basket, which informants say was introduced to the island by the god of art and beauty, Karitaaru. Karitaaru is credited with introducing beauty not only to basketry but also to mangrove fruit and string games.

Women throughout the Star Harbour area also plait a general-purpose article, called a *rarare*, made from a coconut leaf split down the midrib. One half forms the sinistrals and the other the dextrals. The weave can be varied considerably to enhance the appearance of a *rarare* which can function as a



Plate 11

A Santa Ana woman plaiting an extra base onto a *faini* (round basket). The basket is turned inside out, finished on the inside, and then finally the base is pushed out revealing a tidy exterior.

sleeping mat, a table cloth, a door for a house or simply a screen. When freshly made from flame-softened leaves the *rarare* are strikingly beautiful, especially the *rarare-na-faini-fusuria*, which features the *pino* (or basketweave) pattern.

The *pino* pattern is well-remembered by the women because of a story associated with it. A husband slept with another man's wife and the next morning the wronged husband saw clearly imprinted on the back of the culprit the *pino* pattern of his wife. He did not need to ask about the mark because, in the village of Maroqorafu, there was only one woman who could weave that pattern! The culprit was caught out and killed. I mention the story merely to illustrate a point: the women can not only make these plaited articles but they also know the stories which comprise the lore of basketry. They are also quite familiar with the technical terms of their craft such as:

1. *taranqanaqana*, checkerwork, over one and under one,
2. *tarapanipani*, twillwork, over two and under two,
3. *taura*, under one, over three,
4. *afaworo*, under one, over two,
5. *anegana*, the beginning plait on a *faini* basket, and
6. *pino*, the basket weave.

While sleeping mats are imported from Hong Kong all other articles mentioned above are locally made and used locally. According to informants from Santa Ana the *faini*-type of basket is distinctive of the two island cultures.



Plate 12

The dugong net which the Naruka men used successfully to catch a huge dugong. The net is 36 yards long by 5 feet wide and is made of *fagaro* (*Hibiscus*).



Plate 13

Santa Ana men fishing with nets on the reefs at Gupuna. They have just completed a catch after enclosing an area of water with their nets and trapping the fish. Now they are scanning the water for signs of more fish.

Fishing Equipment

As in other parts of Melanesia pigs are so highly valued that the inhabitants of this region eat pork only on ceremonial occasions and the regular source of proteins is fish. The fishermen of the Star Harbour region are skilled in their craft and now participate in the activities of the Coral Seas Fishing Company which periodically sends ships to the area to buy bonito, trevalli, and crayfish. Change in fishing techniques has been encouraged by the Company so that much of the traditional material is no longer used. Nylon lines, Japanese hooks and spinners, diving goggles and underwater flashlights are now common especially around Star Harbour and in Santa Ana.²⁹

Some old techniques are maintained. For example, fishing for flying fish with a kite or *ao*³⁰ of various shapes is still practiced by a few men on both islands, and fishing for garfish (*marore*) by the float technique known as *kasikasi-uwo-ni-marore* in which a set of ten upright, wooden floats each decorated with fish or bird forms and each individually baited with small *aigausu* (goat fish) or *aiganafui* fish is set in the harbour and allowed to drift with the wind. In a demonstration that I witnessed a garfish was caught within seven minutes of the float being set and this was sufficient to win my full admiration of the method. This technique is similar to that reported earlier for Ulawa, by Ivens (1927).

The tops of the float were usually well-decorated with fish and bird forms. Decorated floats are illustrated in Edge-Partington (1890:1:197). A more recent set from Santa Ana is illustrated in Davenport (1971:418-9) and a set from Ulawa is featured in Ivens (1927:385).

Gagasigo, or long line fishing in deep water using *mwau* (octopus) as bait is supposed to be still practised but I did not see any fishermen using the technique. Neither did I observe the *tarataramwau* technique in which an octopus is caught with a cowrie shell bait. In villages on the mainland I saw the results of successful turtle hunting and dugong netting. In January, the men of Tawarafa caught a huge turtle which they carried on a pole to their village. On the same day the people of Naruka were excitedly watching their men cut up the huge, pig-like carcass of the dugong their menfolk had caught the night before. The net used was made during the Christmas period of 1970. Its first catch was the dugong I saw at Naruka on 9 January. The net is 36 yards long by five feet wide and is made of *fagaro* (*Hibiscus tiliaceous*) plaited into a flat three-ply plait. The leader ropes, top and bottom, are made of *gasigo* vine and the floats are the fruit of the *fuu* (*Barringtonia asiatica*) the kernel of which is used in several parts of the Solomons as fish poison. Stone sinkers were used to weight the net (Plate 12).

Throughout the Star Harbour region there are only two dugong nets and both of these are kept in sheds at Namuga close to the favoured spot for dugong in Star Harbour itself.

29. The managers of the Coral Seas Fishing Company have now installed a freezer at Star Harbour and one ship is stationed in the area. Commercial fishing is thus being intensified (Rheault, A. E., 14 July 1972, pers. com.).

30. This was mentioned by Guppy (1887:151) and one is illustrated in Edge-Partington (1890:1:197).

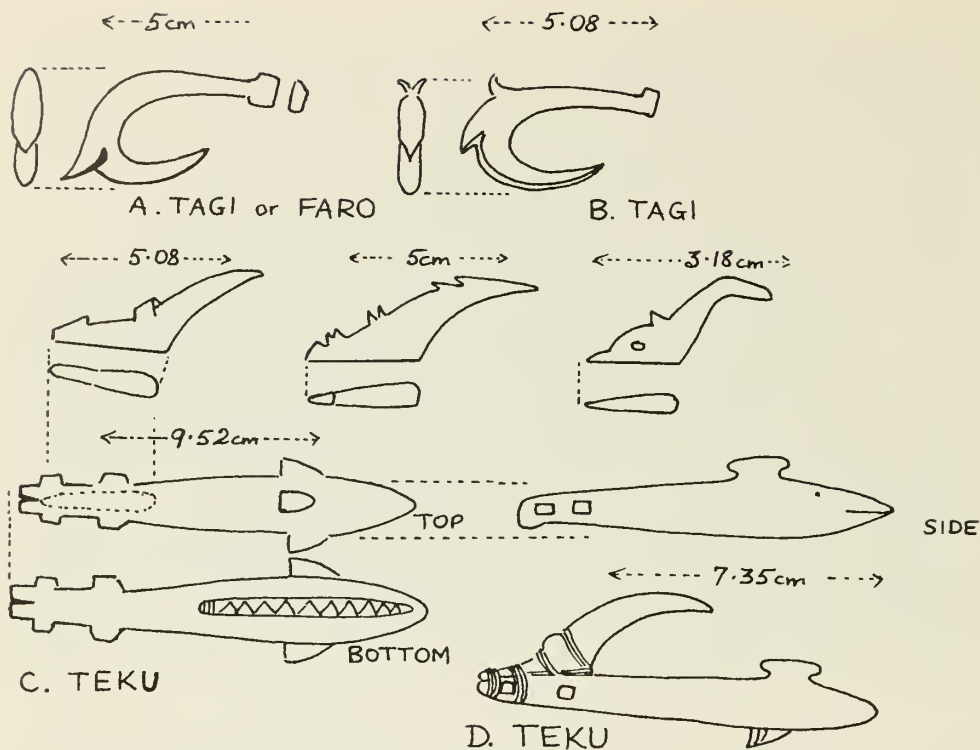


Fig. 10

Fish hooks of Santa Ana.

A, B. The *tagi* is a one-piece hook which is used on the bow rods while fishing for bonito. A more complex *tagi* is made in two sections, the second part being a decoration, and is called *fariqafa*. It is also used on bow rods.

C. Composite lures for bonito which are used on the stern rods of a bonito canoe. Most are made in the shape of a fish with an incised decoration on its underside.

Net fishing, which requires the cooperative efforts of a group of some twenty fishermen is popular at Gupuna, Santa Ana (Plate 13). Each man has an individual net, *gupena*, which is attached to a long slender pole. The net, now made of nylon line, is roughly triangular in shape. The group are under the direction of a leader, called *mani gupena*, who gives the necessary commands. First the men form two parallel lines roughly thirty yards away from each other and each team walks towards the area where the fish is to be surrounded. One line is to the seaward side where waves are breaking on the reef and the other works the inland side. As soon as a school of reef fish is spotted the leader yells a command. There is a frantic rush to enclose the fish as a circle is formed and nets are placed so as to close all gaps. The men move in towards the centre of the circle while another man splashes in the enclosed area so as to frighten the fish into the nets. Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 138, 139) saw this same technique being used at Natagera in the 1931-3 period.

This net technique is efficient and flexible and has a definite advantage over the long continuous net since no time is wasted on untangling and laborious re-setting. Speed of movement is essential in enclosing the fish. Each man keeps the fish caught in his net but when any one individual gets a large catch others are permitted to take fish from his net. The idea is to even out individual catches and redistribution may be necessary at the end of the excitement. On the one occasion when I followed the fishermen everywhere they went, I went home with 18 fish, one from each fisherman. I was told that custom demanded that a gift be made even though I was not fishing but taking photographs instead.

Fishing for bonito is done increasingly by trolling a spinner behind a fast canoe but on Santa Catalina traditional techniques and materials are more widely used. Traditionally, bamboo rods, two in front and two behind, on the specialized bonito fishing canoe, *againiwaiau*, were used. On the prow rods single-piece hooks, known locally as *tagi* or *faro* (Fig. 10A, B), were employed while on the stern rods composite hooks, known as *teku*, were used. Composite hooks were fashioned out of bone, conch shell and pearl shell in the form of a small fish and on the back near the stern a hook mostly without barbs and made of turtle shell, *aunamora*, was attached (Fig. 10C,D).

A large number of one-piece and composite bonito hooks have been sold to tourists and dealers. Probably the most representative collection of fish hooks from the Star Harbour region is held by the Coral Seas Fishing Company in Honiara. On Santa Ana there are private collections of heirlooms, including fish hooks, in the possession of Geoffrey Kuper and his brother Charlie Kuper. All over the area there would be families who still have their old bonito hooks as well as more recent products but it is impossible to estimate the number.

Composite hooks are a salable item at one or two Australian dollars each and thus new copies, often very poorly made, are being manufactured for the market.

Weapons

It would be true to say that there is little left of the traditional stock of weapons. At Naruka, a man called Ragaruma brought out his spears, *aora*, and shield, *qauata*, and demonstrated how these were held and used. Apart from Geoffrey Kuper's collection at Gupuna, Santa Ana, and a few examples at Tawaroga, I did not see other weapons but there are good reasons for this. They are usually hidden away in the ceiling of houses and unless an investigator specifically asks to see them, and I neglected to do so, they will not be brought out. Thus they could be more numerous than this report indicates.

In Geoffrey Kuper's family collection are several decorated shields, *qauata*,³¹ each with a characteristic raised midrib which culminates in a frigate bird motif resembling the letter "W" along its blade (Fig. 11D). There are two shields which

31. The specimen illustrated in Edge-Partington (1890:1:22) is almost identical except for a small difference in decoration of the handle.

A. ROROMARAUGI

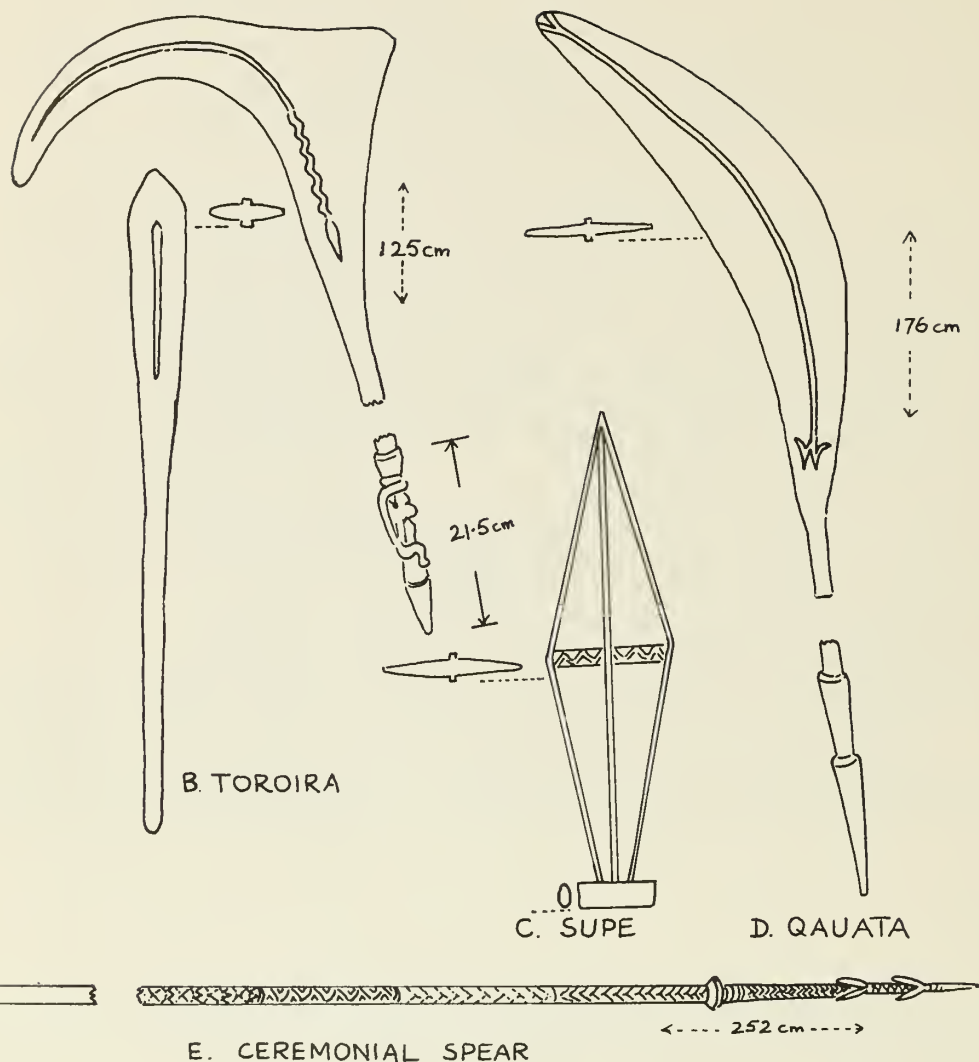


Fig. 11

Weapons in the collection of G. Kuper, Santa Ana.

A. The *roromaraugi* shield, which Guppy claims is a San Cristobal type.

B. A staff-like weapon called the *toroira* which is similar in basic type to clubs in New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga and Rotuma.

C. The *supe*, a hand club which may be constructed out of hard wood or whale-bone.

D. The *qauata* is the more common type of shield in the area.

E. A ceremonial spear whose shaft is decorated with plaited patterns.

differ from the *qauata* in having a projection along the blade and a carved humanoid figure at the pommel. Its blade pattern represents a snake and not a frigate bird and the type of shield is known as *roromaraugi*³² (Fig. 11A). I saw one of these at Tawaroga. A type of hand club known as *supe*³³ is represented by two examples: a wooden one, inlaid with shell, and another made of whale-bone (Fig. 11C). Another weapon, in the collection, is a staff, somewhat similar to the bladed staff of the Maori, Tonga, Samoa and Rotuma and called *toroira* (Fig. 11B).

Spears of two types, the large multi-barbed spear and the ceremonial spear decorated along its shaft with plaited patterns in red and natural fibre colour, are also present. The latter, very finely made, is about 252 cms long (Fig. 11E). Shields vary from 125 cms to 176 cms in length.

Special mention should be made of the bow and arrow and its position in the culture. It is, perhaps, needless to say that I did not see fighting bows anywhere in the Star Harbour area. However, small bows were used for reef fishing. The type I saw in use was similar to that illustrated by Bernatzik (1936: Abb. 154). Informants have no memory of the bow used as a fighting weapon but it was certainly present in the culture. In the popular mime which features the slaying of the Aimatawa people (said to be Polynesian) by the Aifonofono, who were portrayed as dark Melanesians, the leader of the Aimatawa dance team always carried a large bow and arrow. This is illustrated in Bernatzik (1935: pl. 11). Furthermore, in the folklore there are stories of contests of strength with Polynesians from the Reef Islands (Davenport, 1972, pers. com.). One hero in particular demonstrated his power with a bow and arrow. The local people were thus familiar with the bow but did not use it except in historical pantomimes and, perhaps, in fishing although, in the latter case, it is not known how far back in time the practice goes.

At one time the bow and arrow was used as a weapon in Sa'a, Ulawa and, by inference, Santa Ana. In the case of Sa'a the weapon was used continuously up into modern times (Ivens, 1927:123). Bows were in use in Ulawa in 1769 when Surville visited the island but one hundred years later bows had been replaced by spears (Ibid., 123). In view of the close relationship between Ulawa and Santa Ana it is safe to conclude that the same change took place in Santa Ana. Thus, during the 18th century the bow and arrow was the main weapon used in nearly all the small islands – Santa Ana, Santa Catalina, Uki, The Three Sisters, Ulawa and Sa'a, in Maramasike Island. At San Cristobal the spear was the dominant weapon and this weapon is associated mainly with interior bush people and with bush fighting. A change in warfare technology, from bows to spears, is suggestive of increasing San Cristobal and inland influence upon the cultures of the small-island peoples.

32. Also illustrated by Edge-Partington (1890:1:223) where he quotes Guppy's claim that this was a San Cristobal weapon. Dancing clubs are very similar to these two types of shields except that they are fully decorated on the blades.

33. Waite (1969:126) quoting from Bernatzik (1936:77) says the *supe* was made in San Cristobal and exchanged to Santa Ana and Santa Catalina men for pigs, canoes and shell money.

The weapons which remain function as highly symbolic paraphernalia for present day ceremonial functions and they serve as symbols of the past.

If weapons are used now, as might occur when men quarrel over women, the combatants are likely to wield the machete, used everywhere as a bush slasher and as a grass cutter. Guns which must be licensed with the administration are present but are used exclusively in the food quest – shooting wood pigeon, pigs and cattle.

Gardening Equipment

Throughout the area horticulture of the slash-and-burn type is practised but fertility of the ground is not the same everywhere. Santa Ana has the poorest soil and gardens are characterized by numerous outcrops of coral rock and some brown soil. Both Santa Ana and Santa Catalina are coral islands and though the soil at Santa Catalina is more productive neither is as rich as the mainland. Food crops and breadfruit are in short supply in Santa Ana and to a lesser extent at the other island. Taro and large yams as well as supplementary supplies of staples such as the smaller yams and breadfruit must be obtained by trade from the mainland. Bananas are rare in the small islands but plentiful on the mainland. The shortage of food and over-population on the islands seriously affect the ability of island communities to stage ceremonials.

Garden plots usually belong to the matrilineal clan and usufruct is inherited from the mother. Individual men may purchase a plot by exchanging a pig for the rights of ownership. Sons are given plots to work and they may use them while they are alive. On their death the land reverts to the matri-clan.

The universal slashing tools are machetes for small trees and steel axes for large ones. After the burn-off picks are used at Santa Ana to prepare the soil for planting. The sweet potato, *kumara*, introduced by the missionaries from New Zealand, is the main crop and there are several varieties of yams, the *ufi* whose vines climb clockwise and the *fana* or *pana* whose vines, covered with thorns, climb anti-clockwise. The *fana* is sweeter to eat than the *ufi*. Weeding implements are all of steel so that all of the equipment now used is introduced.

Village Houses and Architecture

Throughout the area, village houses, consisting of sleeping houses and kitchens, follow the same basic architectural plan. Some sleeping houses are built with raised floors and the proportion of raised floors to earth floors varies considerably from one village to another. In some villages one may find a store, a church, a medical clinic and one or more custom houses. In addition there may be a copra drier within the village as in Gupuna and in Natagera. The structures which present a plainly intrusive architectural plan are the Government medical clinics which are built of concrete blocks and roofing iron, the copra driers which utilize gasoline drums and roofing iron, and the new church at Ghetā. Overall, indigenous architecture and building materials predominate.

Schools are constructed out of native building materials, more or less to a traditional plan which is modified to suit the purpose. With the exception mentioned above, church architecture blends in to the village style because local materials are used extensively. Most often the church is modelled on the structural plan of a custom house which requires a large ridgepole, *ogofani*, sitting on top of the sideposts, called *aunipeta*. The *ogofani* are locked into place by stout cross beams, termed *bwogu*. The ends of the uppermost *ogofani* are supported by vertical posts called *aunifunuoto*. In order to keep the *ogofani* rigid, short uprights called *soke* support the ridgepole against the crossbeams. Other bracing beams, rafters and battens are added to stiffen the roof structure. In most churches roofing iron is used on the roof only. This material is considered superior to the palm-leaf roof which requires replacement every five years.

Housebuilding activities require many different skills. When the materials are brought in from the bush men and women divide into groups. The women remove the midrib from the ivory nut palm leaves while men split the reedlike stem of the *parawowo* plant, removing the white pith and stripping the outer green skin. The strips are used for sewing the ivory nut palm leaves into thatch sections. Each section is called an *aupenao* (*aupe*= one section, *nao*= leaves) and this is the basic unit for thatching a roof and covering the outside walls (Plate 14). Before *aupenao* sections are added to a house they must be sun-dried on both sides and to this end they are laid out on the ground and turned over until the leaves are a light brown.

The long wooden battens which are used for constructing each *aupenao* are of *pua* or betel nut palm. This same wood is used as flooring material, the wood being peeled and opened out to form one unit of floor covering. The main structural uprights are made of *gugura* which is a hard, long-lasting wood. Housebuilding techniques I observed at both Naruka and Gupuna were the same implying a common folk model and a common body of techniques.

If villages were graded in order of degree of intrusive architecture and technology Maniwowo would easily be the first on the list, since it has many corrugated iron roof buildings and a layout suggestive of a town. It even boasts an electric lighting system to illuminate the village at night. Maniwowo is a Catholic mission station. Next would be Gupuna which is the only village with a piped water system and communal showers. There are several structures with corrugated iron roofs and it has three churches, one belonging to the South Seas Evangelical Church, another to the Anglican Church and a third to a now defunct local nativistic church. Namuga village, established by the Government as a medical centre, also ranks highly on the list. Its architecture is dominated by the medical centre building which features concrete, corrugated iron and glass. It has a wharf which makes it possible for a ship to pull alongside. Everywhere else a small boat or canoe has to be used to get to and from a ship. In Gheta a large church with concrete walls and corrugated iron roof was in the process of construction in 1971 (Green, 1972, pers. com.). All other villages cluster together and rank low on the list. By this I mean that there is less evidence of intrusive building materials, of culturally alien architecture, and of technological features which may alter the native style of living.

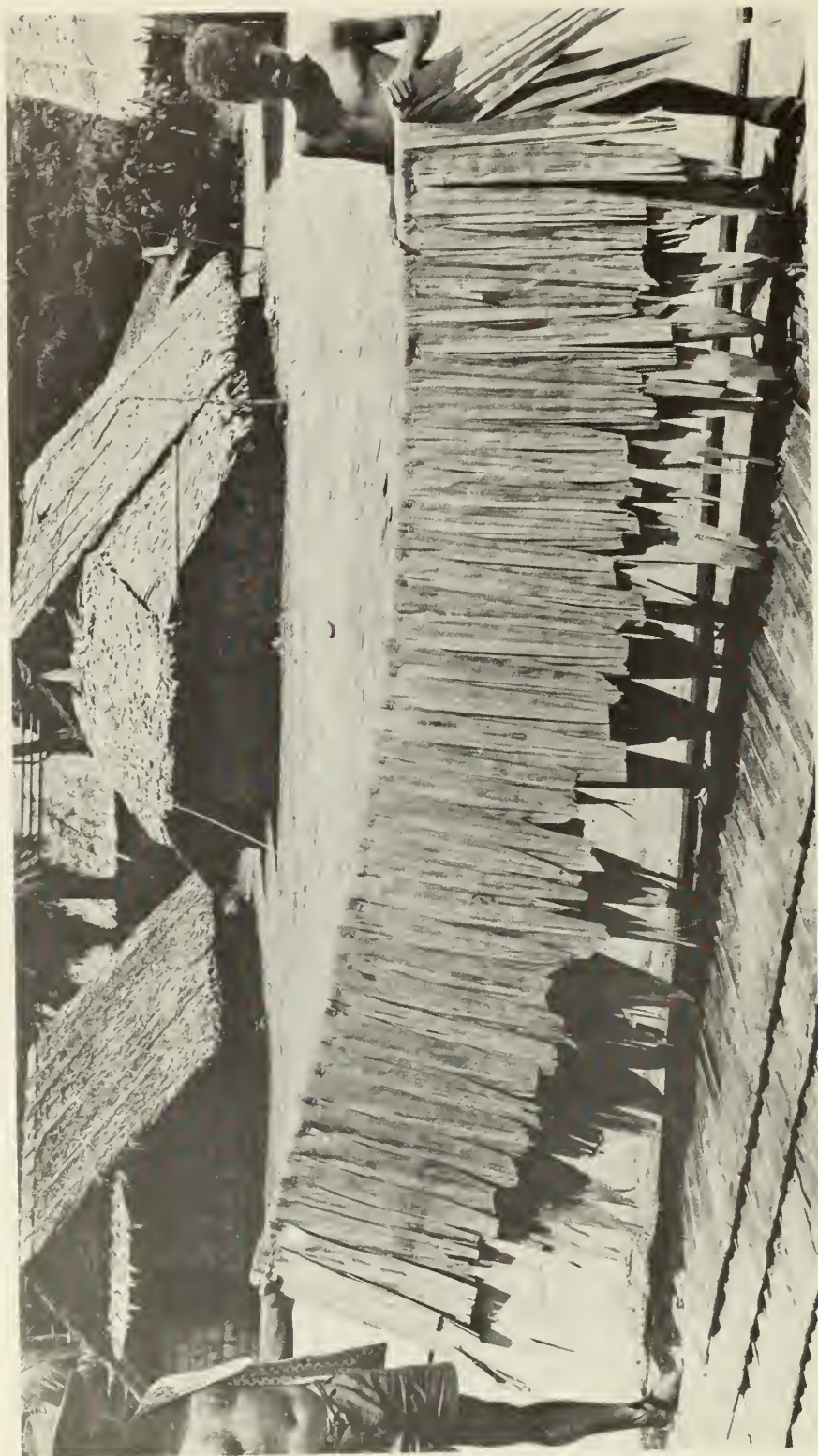


Plate 14

A section of palm-leaf thatching, called *aupenao*, which is a basic building unit. On the ground several sections have been laid out for drying. In the background are two ground-level houses at the village of Naruka. Mr. Geoffrey Kuper, on left, my host, guide and interpreter, is the author of an article on the initiation ceremony in Santa Ana.

In order to provide more detailed information of village structures I give figures for the villages of Santa Ana. In Gupuna, where according to my census of 14 January, 1971, the population was 327. There were 105 structures made up as follows: 40 sleeping houses with raised floors, 19 sleeping houses with earth floors, 27 kitchens, 3 churches, a school, a cooperative store, a clinic and other miscellaneous structures. At Natagera with a population of 225 there were 76 buildings: 21 sleeping houses with raised floors, 24 sleeping houses with earth floors, 17 kitchens, a cooperative store, an SSEC church, an Anglican Church, two custom houses and one copra drier. The smallest village now is Nafinuatogo with a population of 183. Here there are 42 buildings consisting of eight houses with raised floors, 20 with earth floors, three school buildings, a large Anglican church and miscellaneous structures.

Throughout the area the house with raised floor is becoming more and more popular but the rate of change varies considerably. Already 66% of sleeping houses in Gupuna have raised floors but only 46% of sleeping houses in Natagera and 28% in Nafinuatogo. In Santa Catalina villages, the raised-floor house is also much in evidence but I have no figures for this reputedly conservative section of the Star Harbour region. Although the house with a raised floor was initiated by Government action many years ago its popularity now is a matter of local pride. Younger villagers demand a raised floor and only the very old are content with the old style.

The information on structures can now be brought together in order to bring out some facts which might be useful to archaeologists in estimating populations, given a number of structures in a village site. It should be born in mind that the population of Santa Ana is very high at the moment. Actually resident at Santa Ana at the time the survey was made were 735 persons. This should be compared with 360 in 1926 (Kuper: 1926:5). However, over 100 children were absent from the island, several people were away visiting and several others had moved away for employment. If all persons were at home the population would be nearer 1000. Geoffrey Kuper of Santa Ana estimated the population in 1970 to be 1133 and based his estimate on clan counts. I am inclined to accept 1000 as an upper limit.

Given a maximum of 1000 people it will be seen that a total of 223 structures of various functions (roughly one structure per 4.5 individuals) was required to meet the needs of the people. Included in the count of structures were five churches in active use and one abandoned, one health clinic and four school buildings. These non-traditional buildings have largely replaced the custom houses of earlier times. Thus, 4.5 individuals to every structure would seem to apply whether the structures are traditional or not. However, the rate of 4.5 persons per structure is probably too gross and, therefore, useful only for very rough estimates.

Of the total number of structures 176 were domestic dwellings—sleeping houses and kitchens. Based on this figure the rate per dwelling would be six persons. However, this figure is too low because these dwellings do not coincide with households, many of which have both a sleeping house and a kitchen.

Considering sleeping houses alone, the rate per dwelling is approximately eight persons. This rate represents the average number of persons per household when everyone is at home. In order to show that this rate is not farfetched I shall quote a few actual cases from my survey of households. In 21 sleeping houses there were 9 to 10 persons, in 12 there were 10 to 11 persons, in one there were 15 and in another there were 16 persons. Based on actual cases, therefore, a rate of eight persons per sleeping house is reasonable. A more conservative rate can be calculated from the resident population only: hence, six persons per sleeping houses, which reflects the absence of children at schools and the absence of many workers.

In estimating prehistoric populations, 1970-1 rates are probably more realistic than those calculated from the 1926 population of 360. This latter figure is taken from a period of declining population following the introduction of European diseases. Outbreaks of epidemics were documented by Ivens (1927:44) for Sa'a and Ulawa in particular and these same epidemics were bound to have affected most of the San Cristobal trade area. A severe epidemic of dysentery in 1869 killed an estimated 25% of the population. In 1912 a similar epidemic struck the area and in 1925 an influenza epidemic further decimated the population. Thus a population figure of 360, in 1926, for Santa Ana, must reflect unusually severe conditions of depopulation which could have reduced the population by 50% or more. For example in 1896 the estimated population of Sa'a was 250 and yet by 1924 it had been reduced to 100 (Ivens:1927:25).

I have given some figures which may be of use to others and suggested how they can be used in estimating village populations in the Solomon Islands. The problem however, is a complex one and cannot be explored fully in this survey.

Household Equipment

While many families cook either over a small fire or in an earth oven, *umu*, there are a few families who use kerosene pressure stoves. Wood ranges are rare. I saw one at Santa Ana, one at Maniwowo belonging to the Catholic priest and one at Naone, a tiny island near Namuga. In Gupuna, several families used kerosene hurricane lamps for lighting. Tilly lamps are rare but according to the fishermen they prefer to use this type of light for torch fishing. As more households turn to kerosene stoves and lamps there will be a growing local demand for the kerosene which trading vessels bring in for sale.

Even in Gupuna water must be fetched from wells or taps, and carried to the household and stored there. Plastic buckets, used plastic detergent containers, billies, jugs and pots are used for the purpose. All water-carrying containers are introduced items as also are the cooking pots and pans, the plates and dishes, cups and mugs, and cutlery.

Stored in the house are such tools as hammers, saws, adzes, files, hacksaw blades, chisels, planes and machetes. Generally speaking the introduced tools are not common and are thus treated as valuable items. Carvers are especially careful with their tools.

The transistor radio has become an ubiquitous item in the area. Because there are no newspapers or television stations in the area the radio is the only effective means of communication with the rest of the Protectorate and with the world. Families without transistor radios are handicapped since it is important in this far flung corner of the Solomons to know when Government ships or Chinese trading vessels are due, when the Coral Seas Fishing Company is sending a ship to pick up the school children and so on. The radio station in Honiara also broadcasts messages to individuals advising them when they are needed for meetings and jobs. Most islanders listen regularly to the news in pidgin English to find out what is happening in their country.

Odd items of Western culture are present; for example, in many houses school notebooks will be seen but these are used for rolling cigarettes. International magazines such as *Life* and *Time* are present but rare. On visiting the custom houses at Natagera one day, I was surprised to see an old man "reading" *Time* magazine.

In the case of Santa Ana the visitor needs to be cautioned against regarding all of the villagers as unsophisticated primitives. Many of the older men were in contact with the American and allied armed forces during World War II. Several served as ship hands and visited other Pacific Islands. Several more have worked in other parts of the Solomon Islands. One was educated in Great Britain and recently retired from a position as Police Inspector at Honiara. Another was educated in New Zealand and Fiji and trained as a medical officer. There are more acculturated individuals in Santa Ana than at any other portion of the area and this fact is reflected in the political life of the Star Harbour area. Santa Ana people are more active and more vocal than others in the area.

It is worth noting that there were white men living in Santa Ana and in the Star Harbour area before. When Bernatzik (1935:47-9) was at Cape Surville he came across the grave of "Frankie, the Russian." Frankie was an early trader in this area. Apparently, during a bout of drunkenness, he shot a native and in retaliation was speared by the natives. Informants in Santa Ana told me about MacDonald who lived on the island from about 1870 to 1903. It is generally believed that MacDonald fled the island after his son, still a boy at the time, accidentally shot his playmate. Informants claimed that he did not have to flee because he paid adequate compensation for the death of the Santa Ana boy. During his stay in Santa Ana he was instrumental in having several white persons buried in a cemetery that was close to the site of his homestead. I examined the headstones in the cemetery and from them learned about the following people:

- a) Mrs. Miriam Rooney, wife of Rev. Isaac Rooney, a missionary in New Britain, died June 13, 1881. She was 37 years old. She apparently died on ship which happened to be close to Santa Ana at the time. The captain called in to Santa Ana and MacDonald had Mrs. Rooney buried in his plot.³⁴
- b) George Louis Nixon of Cambridge, England, died November 17, 1882, at the age of 31.³⁵

34. The headstone has fallen flat on the ground but is still intact.

35. Nixon's headstone made of beautiful sandstone is used by the Santa Ana people to sharpen their machetes. The stone is being worn away slowly but surely.

c) Captain A. Fergurson, killed by the natives of Bougainville on August 9, 1880. He was 82 years old.³⁶

d) Mr. Frank Naybush, killed by the natives. Informants estimated that he died in 1900.

Lying among the foreigners to the island is a Rotuman who blew himself up while experimenting with dynamite.³⁷

Mr. Henry Kuper, father of the large Kuper family, entered the area before World War I (Bernatzik: 1935:8). He established himself as a plantation owner and trader in Cape Surville. Eventually, he married a Santa Ana woman of the Gafe clan, established a household at Gupuna and lived his life as a member of Santa Ana society. He raised a large family and played an important part in maintaining as much of the traditional culture as possible and in keeping “cheats” out of Santa Ana. To him we owe early written accounts of female tattooing and the Aimatawa mime which were published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society. These accounts are lasting testimony of his genuine interest in local culture. He is buried at Santa Ana, the home he preferred over Hamburg in Germany. One of his sons is presently a village chief in Gupuna.

The progressiveness of Santa Ana in matters of education and local politics is probably due, in no small part, to the influence and leadership of Henry Kuper.

36. Fergurson shares the Nixon headstone.

37. The grave site is no longer protected and kept tidy by the village Headman as used to be the case when Nimanima was Headman. People caught sharpening their machetes on Nixon's headstone are subject to a fine but no one has ever been officially caught.

The New Art

All men 18 years and over must pay taxes to the Eastern Districts Council and parents must find a few dollars to buy trade goods, pay fares on Government ships and pay fees for the education of their children. There are limited ways of participating in the cash economy of the Solomon Islands. One is to sell one's labour but there is little local demand for labour. The local doctor, school teacher and headman are usually the only individuals on salary. Sometimes short-term labour is hired for work on copra, or on a Council project, or assisting an anthropologist who is doing fieldwork in the area. For longer contracts men must leave the area. A second source of cash is selling copra to the Chinese traders. A third is selling fish to the Coral Seas Fishing Company, and a fourth is through interpersonal trade among the islanders themselves. A final and important source is through selling artifacts, either old heirlooms or, more importantly, newly produced art objects.

Nowadays Santa Catalina is the main centre of production for the new art with Santa Ana next, Ghetta and then Tawaroga. At Ghetta the outstanding carver is Lucas Qariqoni (Plate 15), at Tawaroga it is Henry Fagataro and at both Santa Catalina and Santa Ana there are several master carvers. The carvers use traditional techniques which they apply to a wide range of objects which, recently, were very important cultural items. But the carvers are also experimenting with new forms. For example, the free-standing human figure has become the mainstay of the new art (Plate 16). Themes which were not included in the traditional art are now being developed. For example, on house posts one may find a man being eaten by a snake or in a composite free-standing carving a priest may be drawing the "devil" out of a patient. Wood carving is the predominant artistic medium for the expression of cultural ideas, themes and feelings.

It is especially noticeable that Santa Catalina which is everywhere regarded as conservative is more innovative in its art than any other part of the area. Ironically Santa Ana which is regarded as progressive and innovative socially is very conservative in its art. Here carvers strive to reproduce old forms instead of creating new forms as in Santa Catalina. One probable reason for this is that in Santa Ana there is a greater concentration of old artifacts which the carvers use as models. Thus the carvers are influenced by the models before them. On the other hand, there are few old models available in Santa Catalina.

The new direction in which the art of the region is heading is being actively encouraged by the white entrepreneurs who give their seal of approval every time they buy a new creation. In Santa Catalina, a carver produced a house post which everyone on the island regarded as non-traditional and consequently of little value. To general amazement a buyer gave \$84 for it. This is the highest price that has ever been paid a carver for a new piece of work.³⁸ Because dollars are a scarce item this transaction convinced the carvers that they had better be innovative.³⁹ This is not to suggest that objects following more closely the genuine models do not sell. They do, and the returns are good.

38. This successful transaction gave the carver considerable prestige and confidence and now he is easily one of the most productive and creative carvers in the Star Harbour region.

39. In this area there has always been an economic incentive to art production. The fact that carvers are producing art in order to gain cash rewards is thus not a new idea or a retrograde step.

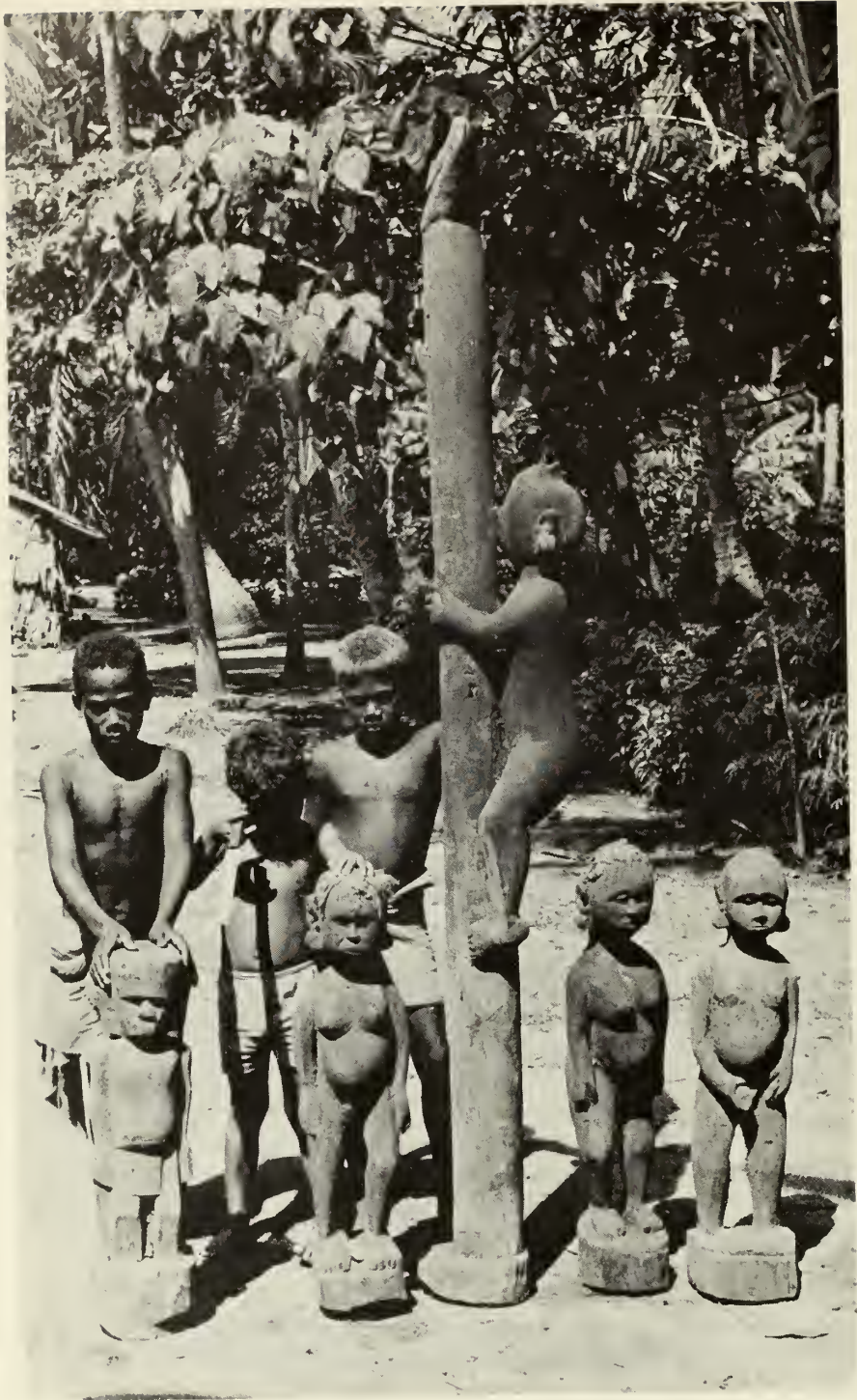


Plate 15
Examples of woodcarving by the carver Lucas Qaroqoni of Gbeta (9 Jan. 1971).



Plate 16

Art objects carved by Sao of Santa Catalina and displayed before a buyer. Free-standing figures, carved more naturalistically than the traditional house posts, are a new art form in the Star Harbour region. Ornaments and traditional loincloth are featured on male figures and breast and body tattoo patterns on females. One female has been carved with a *qangoqango* through her nose.

From an art point of view the developments at Santa Catalina are worth watching carefully. Here there is a unique situation in which the buyers want to encourage good art and at the same time are anxious to buy as regularly as their outlets will permit. A demand upon the carvers for technically superior work is an insurance that the local art will not yet degenerate into shoddy airport art as one finds already in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The cash returns for carvers are not outstanding by world standards but, in this area, a return of \$10 for a single piece of work is fairly usual, \$30 is considered good and anything above that is outstanding. For the year 1970 the highest return in cash was obtained by Henry Fagataro of Tawaroga, at close to two hundred dollars. Farunga, also of Santa Catalina, was next with well over half a hundred. Several carvers made no sale for a number of reasons, such as, not active that year, retired, or too busy constructing a canoe for a relative. It will be seen, therefore, that the amounts of cash obtained through the arts are modest but for many carvers this is their only source of cash income.

A major difficulty faced by the carvers of the Star Harbour area in the context of bargaining with a buyer was how to establish a "fair" price. There was also an added difficulty in trying to anticipate the peculiar likes of a buyer. The questions they asked themselves were: Why does a buyer select one item and not another? What criteria does he use for fixing a price? Several carvers admitted to being completely confused over the first question. Sometimes a buyer

purchased an item which conformed to the traditional style and at other times he purchased a non-traditional object. They observed that sometimes an item was selected because of its technical excellence and at other times this was not the criterion used, as far as they could judge. Nevertheless, carvers continued to ponder the question and each one formulated his own theory and then modified it if the next buyer did not buy any of his creations. The carvers thus played a kind of intellectual guessing game and the conclusions reached would influence both the content and the style of the objects they made (Plate 17).

The second question also puzzled them. If values were calculated on a straight translation from the traditional economic system to the cash economy used by the buyer the objects would be priced above what the buyer was willing to give, in most cases but not all. Again, attempts were made to “discover” by observation the criterion used by the buyer. In the absence of other recognizable criterion the carvers usually relied on precedents but this practice was not satisfactory because sometimes a buyer would give more or less than the price previously established by precedent. All told, the carvers were placed at a disadvantage because they could not understand or anticipate the rules of selection and pricing which each buyer used. As far as they could determine there was no system at all. There was one general tendency, however, which seemed to be constant. In the majority of cases they did not receive what they considered was a fair return for their work and skill.



Plate 17

An incomplete figure of a woman with two bonito fish, carved by Nakakaga of Tawaroga. Here the carver has decided that what the buyers want is something following a traditional theme. However, he has reasoned that changing the sex of the figure to female and emphasizing the breasts would help “persuade” the buyer to purchase his work.

A study of prices paid to local carvers revealed that they were receiving about 10 to 15 cents per hour for their work except in very exceptional cases when the rate rose to about 50 cents. An estimate of the time taken to complete, say, a decorated ceremonial bowl, was based on a cooperative project in which two carvers from Gupuna in Santa Ana agreed to work strictly by the clock. One carver was considered by his colleagues a fast worker and the other a slow worker. When the project was completed we then discussed the problem of fixing a price which was based on an hourly rate consistent with ruling rates in the Solomon Islands Protectorate and a floating amount varying from \$5 to \$10 for artistic excellence. The result was the “fixing” of a price of \$30 for a medium-sized shell-inlaid bowl of good technical quality, which worked out at just over 20 cents per hour. This price was approximately 100% higher than prices established by precedent.

It is interesting to compare prices paid in the Star Harbour area with those in the Canadian North. Graburn (1967:32) estimated that the rate varied from 15 to 50 cents which suggests that point-of-origin prices paid for art objects made by native artists are about the same everywhere. By the time the objects reach their destination in the art circuits of Europe and North America the price could have been increased by as much as 1000%. Native artists, in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere, do not realize fully that the buyer they confront is but one link in a chain of entrepreneurs. Nor do they realize that the price he is prepared to pay is directly related to the demands of the art circuit rather than to their needs. It is worth noting that a few men in Santa Ana had heard about the fantastic prices paid in New York and the conclusion they reached was that the buyer at the point of origin was cheating them.

To the question as to how people of the area can survive on such a small amount of cash an answer can be given. Fortunately for the islanders the traditional economic system is still functional and the cash economy is supplementary to it. Apart from rice people can produce most of their food supply and are thus largely self-sufficient with regard to food. Clothing needs are minimal.

Conclusions

It is clear from this survey that cultural-historical relationships link the Star Harbour region with the rest of San Cristobal and with Ulawa and Sa'a, at South Malaita. Underlying the cultures of the Eastern District or, more properly, the Makira area since the Santa Cruz group must be excluded, is a common core of cultural traits, some of which result from common ecological factors, some from redistribution through trade and some from historical relationships. The common core of traits consists of the following: architectural style, building materials, preferred food crops, the ceremonial importance of the pig and the bonito fish, food bowls (except Sa'a), slit gongs (except Santa Ana and Ulawa), the plank-and-rib type of canoe, weapons, shell and teeth money, some social organizational features, parts of the ceremonial costume, and technology. Some of these same features occur in Malaita and continue into Guadalcanal (Hogbin, 1964).

Certain cultural items are more restricted in their distributions and are indicative of closer cultural relationships between the communities which share them. For example, the Star Harbour area shares some selected culture traits with Ulawa, Sa'a in south Malaita and probably with Uki and The Three Sisters Islands. However, there is insufficient data available for detailed comparisons with Uki and The Three Sisters but the limited evidence on custom houses and folklore (Fox, 1925) suggests that these locations ought to be included. Fox (1925:6) claimed Uki was practically an Ulawa colony but suggests that it was not always so; a point which has since been disproved by archaeological investigations (Green, 1972, pers. com.). Before giving examples of shared features it will be necessary, for the sake of precision, to separate the Star Harbour area into two parts. The two offshore islands, Santa Ana (Owaraha) and Santa Catalina (Owariki) I shall call Owa and the mainland portion of the area I shall call Mainland Star Harbour.

The custom house of the *aofa* or *taoha* type link Mainland Star Harbour, Owa, Sa'a, Ulawa and Uki together. On the evidence of Guppy the northern portion of San Cristobal needs to be included and according to one of my informants Haununu also used the same kind of custom house. All told, the distribution of the *aofa* is fairly wide and on present evidence excludes only the Bauro area of San Cristobal. Skull containers in the form of mythical sharks should logically follow the same distribution pattern but available evidence limits it to Mainland Star Harbour, Owa, Ulawa and Sa'a. Mainland Star Harbour shares the *fofoto* type of pudding mixer with Ulawa while Owa shares the *apii*, or vertical mixer with Sa'a. These mixers may be regarded as shared innovations which are diagnostic of specific contact.

Another example of a shared innovation is the *qari* (*bwari*) motif used in tattooing, which is limited to Owa and the Arosi area.

Initiation procedures into the bonito cult which follow the Ulawa model (Ivens, 1927) link Ulawa with Sa'a (Ivens, 1927), Owa (Kuper, 1937) and probably with Uki. Implied is a common set of necessary material items such as bonito canoes, fishing rods, bonito hooks, costume, seclusion houses and initiation platforms. Comparisons with Ulawa and Sa'a certainly point towards the

existence within the Eastern District of a sub-culture area consisting mainly of small island societies — Owa, Uki, Ulawa — except for Sa'a which is on the larger island of Maramasike.

The origin myths of the Gafe clan of Santa Ana include Ulawa as an integral part of their geographical domain (Mead, 1972a) and it is suggested that Ulawa and Santa Ana share common origins. For example, the shark deity, Karemanua, was a Santa Ana ancestor who, after transformation into a deity, settled at Ulawa. Other origin myths include also Maramasike Island, thus linking Sa'a into the sub-area. But it should also be noted that Santa Ana shares with the Kaoka speakers of Guadalcanal the same spirit land for the dead (Hogbin: 1964:83).⁴⁰

Available evidence indicates that Owa and Ulawa interacted rather more closely with each other than with other parts of the trade area. A few specific culture traits reflect the close relationship. Firstly, the long-distance canoe used formerly by the warriors and sailors of Owa and Ulawa was identical in design and decoration. Both areas were reputed to be the main suppliers of this type of vessel to the rest of the trade area and both were credited with providing the technical and ritual skills of the area's transport system. Ivens (1927:8) states clearly that Ulawa supplied canoes to Sa'a, Uki and the upper part of San Cristobal and carvers from the Owa area say that they supplied canoes for the lower part up as far as Haununu Bay. Owa-Ulawa men were respected for their skills, feared because of their powerful sea deities and military powers and hated for their success.

Secondly, both areas practised facial tattoo and used basically the same range of decorative motifs though in different combinations. An exception is the central forehead motif which Owa shares with Arosi. If other art domains are considered it will be found that, with few exceptions, the basic sculptural forms are similar as are the decorative motifs applied to them. In fact, a strong case can be made for dividing the Eastern Solomon Island style area into two parts: one part consisting of mainland San Cristobal and the other part of the offshore islands including Ulawa and Sa'a. Suggested names for these sub-styles are Makira Mainland and Owa-Ulawa.

It is worthwhile exploring the idea of sub-styles a little further before returning to the subject of Owa-Ulawa relationships. Although the labels are geographical they are not intended to have precise geographical boundaries. For example, Mainland Star Harbour is associated with the Owa-Ulawa style and it is highly possible that Haununu conforms more to the Owa-Ulawa style than to the Makira Mainland style. Uki and The Three Sisters would be characterized as

40. The same spirit land is shared by Ulawa and Sa'a, which indicates that the Marau Sound area is probably part of the Makira trade system. However, the evidence is conflicting. In his foreword Green indicates that in the past metamorphic rock for adze construction was traded from Marau Sound to San Cristobal. There may have been direct contact between Marau Sound and the Arosi area. Yet Ivens (1927: 154-5) recorded an incident from the recent past which indicates that Marau Sound was probably peripheral to the Makira system because a trading party to Sa'a was attacked. Probably the trade route for Marau Sound was via Malaita (Hogbin, 1964), into Sa'a and Ulawa and then into San Cristobal.

basically Owa-Ulawa in style. Arosi is likely to have many Owa-Ulawa features owing to a longstanding friendship with Sa'a that permitted Sa'a people to stay for long periods in the Arosi area (Ivens: 1927:39). The basic Makira Mainland style is that found in the Bauro area, elements of which penetrated both the Arosi and Kahua areas of San Cristobal and some of which diffused into the Owa-Ulawa area. What these divisions recognize are: (a) different ecological zones (insular versus mainland) (b) different trade patterns (ocean routes versus land routes), (c) differential political strength (manipulators versus manipulated), (d) different impact of Polynesian influence (strong Polynesian influence in small islands, versus little Polynesian influence on mainland). Thus, the sub-styles suggested above relate on the ground to groups of people who share many cultural affinities and who interact through trade, dance exchange visits and shared ceremonials.

Returning now to features shared between Ulawa and Owa: perhaps the most striking evidence of close relationship is the fact that both Owa and Ulawa gave up the bow as a fighting weapon and adopted the spear. Sa'a did not participate in the change.

The more one enquires into questions of inter-relationships the more one is impressed by the complexity of the evidence. Numerous cultural links require disentanglement from the web of culture. For example, the Polynesian-like character of some Owa customs has already been pointed out by Fox (1925) and others. The presence of a Polynesian type of chieftainship in Santa Ana was noted and confirmed in Sa'a and Ulawa by Ivens (1927). Other Polynesian-like traits are: (a) the division of the population into chiefly and non-chiefly categories as in Owa, Ulawa, Sa'a and on Fox's (1925:16) evidence also in the Arosi area and (b) the belief in Owa, Ulawa and Sa'a that after death the spirit takes a long journey resting at Arite (The Three Sisters) and then finally settling at an island of paradise in the Marau Sound of Guadalcanal (Bernatzik: 1935:32; Ivens: 1927:158). The light skin colouring of the Owa people is immediately apparent to anyone visiting the area and this is a factor in the development of tattooing in the Owa-Ulawa region.

The original migration of Polynesian-like people, the Aimatawa, to Santa Ana is dramatized in a pantomime which was recorded by Kuper (1924). Several oppositions are presented in the dance: light skin (Aimatawa) versus black skin (Aifonofono), bow and arrow versus spear, weak versus strong. In the dance most of the Polynesians are killed and carried off by the Aifonofono, but some escape into the bush. It is clear in the mime that the heroes are the dark-skinned, spear-armed Aifonofono. The folklore of the Mwaroa clan of Santa Ana specify links with the Reef Islands and these links are confirmed in the folklore of the Polynesians of the Reef Islands (Davenport, 1972, pers. com.). There is every likelihood, therefore, that Polynesian influence came into the area via the Reef Islands, into Santa Ana and from thence into other parts of the Makira trade area. Links with the Reef Islands were, apparently, severed because there is no evidence whatsoever that the Reef Islands participated in the Makira trade system in the recent past. From the evidence of archaeology Green (pers. com.) suggests that 2,000 to 3,000 years ago trade did occur. The

Pagewa (Shark) clan of Santa Ana came originally from an island called Teo which according to the folklore sank beneath the sea (Fox: 1925: 169-171). Remnants of the Teo people settled at Ulawa, San Cristobal and Santa Ana. The most powerful gods in Santa Ana were Pagewa gods. Karemanua, already mentioned, was one of them and effigies of this deity are widely distributed over the Makira area. A more localized god was Waumauma. Although the Pagewa clan is now extinct it did, in earlier times, consolidate links with Ulawa and the mainland.

Probably the last powerful clan to settle in Santa Ana was the Mwa (Snake) clan. According to Mwa traditions (Mead, 1972a) their homeland was Haununu, the traditional production centre of shell-money for the Makira trade system. Integration of this clan into the social organization of Santa Ana consolidated the trading position of Owa with Haununu Bay and at the same time probably influenced the adoption of a moiety system in Santa Ana. Thus, at all the important trade centres of the Makira area Owa men could appeal to kinship and historical links to help them in their transactions.

I have stressed interlinkages from Owa to other parts of the Makira style area. One could shift to other locations and describe interlinkages from those points. For example, Sa'a sailors made long voyages to Arosi, Fagani in the Bauro Area, and to Santa Ana (Ivens:1927:40). Furthermore, in the Sa'a area they followed the same custom of showing new overseas canoes around different locations (Ivens:1927:40) as was observed in the Star Harbour area by Bernatzik (1935).

The interlocking of cultures in the Eastern Solomons to form what I am now calling the Makira trade system area or the Makira style area has resulted from several causes. Migration and settlement of groups have aided in interlocking communities, as in the case of the Mwa (Snake) clan of Santa Ana. A common heritage, as in the case of Ulawa, Sa'a and Owa societies, encourages ease in interaction which, in turn, helps in the distribution of ideas. Inter-marriage, as between Owa and Mainland Star Harbour, and between Ulawa and Santa Ana further consolidates the interlinking of social and economic networks. All societies in the Makira style area interacted economically in varying degrees of intensity in the trade system and by this mechanism elements of material culture, art and technology were diffused widely all through San Cristobal itself and then out to the offshore islands.

The phenomenon of trade systems in Melanesia is relatively well known because of Malinowski's work in the Trobriands and Harding's (1967) in the Huon Gulf – New Britain area. The custom of displaying canoes on their maiden voyages is also familiar. Lesser known is the phenomenon of dance exchange visits which in the Makira style area was not only a means of interlocking societies, diffusing ideas, maintaining social relationships between far flung communities, but also a means of providing relaxation and entertainment for the people. This, as well as other systems of areal interaction, helped control and decrease the possibility of open conflict, too much of which would have made interaction impossible.

Dance exchange visits called *aara* were tied to the political and economic system. Two men, say one from Santa Ana and one from Ulawa, decide to take the same name and thus be *marafuna* to each other. They exchange red shell money to seal the bond and then arrange who pays the first visit. For those leaders who cannot inherit a chieftainship success in *aara* aids in the quest of bigmanship. A visiting party of dancers travels by long-distance canoe. The leading canoe carrying the male dance team is lifted bodily out of the water by the hosts and bounced in the air several times, then carried to the village plaza where it and the passengers are put down. Other canoes in the fleet simply land ashore without ceremony. Canoes carrying women may have to detour to another landing place in order not to pass in front of a male custom house. The visitors hang red shell money on the *toofi* which has been especially built for them and from that moment the hosts are entertained in the early morning and late afternoon, every day, for a week. In return the hosts provide accommodation and ceremonial food for the guests. A strict count is kept of pigs' heads because an exact number of pigs must be offered on the return visit.

Evidence of *aara* visits come through clearly in the biographical details on Star Harbour artists. For example, Kanana (Mrs. Henry Kuper) of the Gafe clan, tattooed women from Arosi, Bauro and Ulawa as well as women from Star Harbour itself. Most of the outside women were tattooed during an *aara* to Santa Ana. Maemae, a carver of Natagera, took part in four *aara* from Ulawa to Santa Ana. On the last occasion, probably about 1918, his colleagues threw him overboard just as their canoe was leaving Santa Ana. A local woman fell madly in love with Maemae and she cried so pitifully at the farewell that the dancers decided Maemae had to stay. He married her and settled thereafter at Natagera. Subsequently, he took part in three *aara* from Santa Ana to San Cristobal. David Tarofimana, also of Natagera, took part in three *aara* to Ulawa and one to Tawaroga. He made two trips to the Haununu Bay area selling canoes. Henry Fagataro of Tawaroga, but formerly Gupuna, was host to an Ulawa *aara* in 1924. Reresimae, a master carver of Natagera, took part in two visits to the village of Haraina, in Ulawa. He told me that Waa and Piringisau arranged a visit to Ngorangora in Ulawa. On another occasion Piringisau took a dance party to the village of Mouta, at Ulawa. Mwamwata, who was then sacred chief, took a party to Ulawa and received one from Sa'a.

There is thus ample evidence of *aara*⁴¹ from and to Santa Ana and since dance, mime and music were featured such visits must have helped not only in encouraging high standards of performance but in constructing a common style of dancing.

Here, I have focused attention upon such mechanisms as trade, *aara* and the *atoato* custom of showing off canoes during a ceremonial maiden voyage, which helped to fashion a relatively homogeneous style over a wide geographical area. This is preferred over reliance only on the distribution of material items. The latter approach produces a static model of a style area by ignoring the activities

41. An *aara* visit may be timed to coincide with an important ceremonial occasion. For example, in 1943, a dance party from Ulawa provided the entertainment for the final day of the initiation ceremonies at Gupuna.

of people who create and maintain styles and by paying little attention to variations within the area. I have indicated that the Makira style area can be divided into two parts or sub-systems because certain societies interacted more with some societies than with others. However, more detailed studies will show that in spite of the powerful mechanisms of diffusion that existed each locality was still able to develop unique cultural features. Thus in the Owa area female tattooing, kite fishing, the initiation shield called *maramaraitapa*, and a ritual pole which every male kept in his house (Davenport, 1971) are examples of local specializations. The differences among the various sectors of the style area can be identified by studying their unique developments.

The information given in this section helps to place the Star Harbour region within a wider area of cultural influence and indicates some of the main strands of its historical and cultural relationships. Trade within the traditional Makira system has long since ceased. The area is now fragmented into sub-areas while overseas trading is now monopolized mainly by Chinese traders. The highly prized overseas canoes are no longer taken on display tours. *Aara* have become increasingly rare although while I was in the field there was talk of receiving an Ulawa party. However, while no one objected to the prospect of good entertainment there was considerable doubt as to whether the economy of Santa Ana, given the present population, could stand such a visit.⁴²

Trade, canoe display tours, and dance visits stimulated the arts and the production of canoes, club-houses, and all manner of artifacts. Without these systems, each fragmented part of the overall system must, of necessity, operate in isolation. Thus, a general tendency in the Star Harbour area, as in others, is increasing isolation from the traditional resources of the past and increasing exposure to the resources of acculturation. In the long run these tendencies conspire to terminate development of native arts. Fortunately, this has not yet happened in the Star Harbour area. Should the arts continue, as they are, one would expect that the style of Star Harbour art would gradually deviate from the Owa-Ulawa model until finally a distinctive local style is developed. The process of stylistic differentiation seems to be already underway in the Star Harbour area.

While there is no doubt that the Star Harbour region is being slowly westernized through political organization, education, health services, communication systems and through the influence of Christian missions the pace of change has been sufficiently slow and the centres of civilization remote enough to permit the people to maintain their basic life style.⁴³ Economic necessity on the one hand keeps a damper on the rate of change and on the other hand forces people in the area to continue exploiting the natural environment in accordance with their indigenous economic system.

By far the most significant change has come about through conversion to Christianity. Elaborate ceremonials associated with the bonito fish are gone

42. An *aara* was thought necessary to smooth over a local conflict and so re-establish harmonious relationships in the village of Gupuna.

43. I was mistaken in thinking that the main threat to local culture was outside Western influence. In this area, natural disasters of the kind described in the postscript can change everything drastically overnight, usually in the direction of severe cultural impoverishment.

and with them many ritually important artifacts. Customs associated with death have changed, too, and thus there is no serious reason for constructing artistic human bone containers any more. As fine art is closely integrated with religion it must suffer when the system which provides its themes, its motivations, needs and satisfactions suddenly becomes obsolescent. Thus, art in the Star Harbour region has changed and, if it is to survive, new needs, new directions and new satisfactions must be developed to give it a new heart. This change is now underway.⁴⁴

The golden age of Star Harbour art, when artists produced with aesthetic restraint such objects as house posts, shark skull containers, model bonito canoes for holding the bones of important men, bonito canoes for catching the highly desired bonito and for initiating youth, the ceremonial bonito canoe, the ocean-going canoe, the ceremonial bowl for *susugu* pudding, the ceremonial mixing containers – the upright *apii* and the horizontal *fofoto*, individual sacrificing bowls, wooden spears and shields, and initiation shields, and when female artists tattooed the bodies of women with frigate bird motifs has passed.⁴⁵ All that remains intact from that age is *sege-sege*, facial marking. Although different types of canoes are still to be seen and are, in fact, still being made the cultural enthusiasm for them is gone because they have been stripped of much of their high ritual value. They are now merely canoes to be measured for efficiency and flexibility against the dug-out powered by an outboard engine.

Costume ornaments are still relatively plentiful and their high value remains because they are still vehicles by which prestige can be reached. They still represent real wealth for marriage ceremonies and they are negotiable. If anything, their value is now greatly inflated because no more shell money, which is the main ingredient of most costume items, is produced at Haununu. Strings of shell money, both red and white, strings of porpoise teeth and flying fox teeth are also still negotiable in transactions among the native population. The pig also maintains its high cultural value as reflected by the present price of \$60 for a good-sized animal. Pork continues to be the central food item on ceremonial occasions.

There has been a steady loss in the area of the large and impressive custom houses. Yet, as we have seen, a new one was built recently at Maniwowo and another one was being prepared at Mwakorukoru. A community's hesitation over building a custom house is usually explained in terms of economics. The required ceremonies are too protracted and cost too much. At a time when "bigmanship" is now associated with Council politics rather than with traditional concerns it is difficult to find a leader willing and sufficiently influential to undertake the construction of a custom house.

The matrilineal clan system of the area is also still functioning and individuals define their social position in terms of clan membership. Marriages continue

44. The ideology formerly linked to the religious and political systems now stresses art as an expression of cultural identity and pride.

45. Eclipsed also are the initiation platforms which provided artists with opportunities of displaying their skills in wood sculpture and in architecture.

to be exogamous but now there are many more marriage partners who come from outside the Star Harbour area, for example, from Ulawa, Arosi, Malaita, Fiji and Micronesia. Participation in the economic activities of the Protectorate has spread the local population far and wide. Sometimes family units have left the area but more often than not the breadwinner of a nuclear family is absent for long periods of time, thus placing the burden of the food quest upon the wife. However, the trade goods he brings and the cash which becomes available to the extended family as a result of continuous employment compensate for husband absenteeism.

Much of the technology has changed as a result of either introducing new tools to carry out old functions or of new economic activities which bring in cash. Copra drying and fishing on a commercial basis necessarily bring in new material items and new techniques. For example, diving goggles and underwater flashlights are common pieces of equipment. The greater mobility provided by a dug-out canoe and outboard engine is fully appreciated in commercial fishing activities and in carrying copra from shore to ship.

The rate of change in the area could be accelerated by Government action if accompanied by strong economic incentives. A tourist industry, for example, could provide more opportunities for local individuals to sell their labour and their handicrafts. Some of the people of Santa Ana are particularly keen to open up the area to tourists because, as they say, all they have is a beautiful island, hospitable people, and lots of artifacts to sell.⁴⁶

With dollars as scarce as they are in the area local leaders see art production as one practical industry which they can develop. The leaders are very helpful to any buyer who comes into this area. After a buying visit by the Coral Seas Fishing Company the cash resources of Santa Catalina were richer by an estimated \$500 (Plate 18). On another occasion when Mr. Geoffrey Dennis bought art objects Santa Catalina gained \$300. Santa Ana carvers gained \$100 as a result of my own purchases on behalf of the Auckland Museum. During my brief stay in the area an estimated \$1000 in cash was earned collectively by the carvers of Santa Ana and Santa Catalina. Local leaders are well aware of the economic potential of art production. Thus, the new art is being actively encouraged not only by the entrepreneurs who link the centre of production with the art circuit of the Western world but also by the local leaders, who view it as an expression of their cultural identity as well as a means of earning cash.

Another incentive which yields both prestige and cash is the annual Agricultural Show in Honiara. Carvers from all over the Solomon Islands exhibit their work at the show. In 1970 the first prize was won by Henry Fagataro, master carver, formerly of Santa Ana but now resident in Tawaroga. This carver has thus established a national reputation for himself and in economic terms this has resulted in firm orders for more art objects. The second prize was won by a Santa Catalina carver. Success leads to more success and at the time I left the area the carvers were enthusiastically creating more new art objects.

46. But beauty is a fleeting thing, as demonstrated by the cyclone of 1971.



Plate 18

Mr. Bayard Fox, of the Coral Seas Fishing Company, visits Santa Catalina to buy art objects. The transactions are public performances as shown in this photograph. The carver brings out his work for exhibition, the buyer chooses what he wants, haggling is conducted quietly, while the public keeps back at what is regarded as a discreet distance.

As mentioned in the survey there is one aesthetic activity which is not influenced directly by white entrepreneurs. This is the art of *segesege* or of facial unpigmented tattoo. This art is applied over the whole Star Harbour region now whereas, formerly, according to informants, it was limited to the two islands. Artists are commissioned by patrons who reward the experts in trade goods, traditionally important food items and in shell and teeth currency. Procedures followed in the art of *segesege* indicate the traditional method of commissioning art production and rewarding the carvers and artists. In the cash economy sector of art production there is some commissioning of work but most objects are produced and stockpiled so that when a buyer comes into the area the carver can present a variety of objects.

Star Harbour culture has not yet reached that point in the acculturative process when the main bases of the social organization and the economic system are so drastically altered that the local people can no longer live according to their traditional life style. This cultural situation is in direct contrast to many Polynesian and North American Indian cultures which have been severely modified and constricted by Western culture. In the Star Harbour region no threat is posed by a European population and with independence coming much of what happens in the future can be influenced by the local population.

On the evening of December 6, 1971, some ten months after I left the field, Cyclone Ursula struck the Star Harbour Region.⁴⁸ The eye of the cyclone passed over the two islands and its destructive force covered the entire area from Maniwowo to Tawarogo. On Santa Ana and Santa Catalina every house was wrecked and the vegetative cover stripped of leaves. On the mainland the results were equally devastating.⁴⁹

The village of Maniwowo lost all its windows and corrugated iron roofs.⁵⁰ At Mwakorukoru, the memorial canoe was shattered in pieces.⁵¹ The two custom houses at Natagera no longer exist and the artifacts within them were badly damaged.⁵² The Health Clinics at Namuga and Gupuna lost their windows and iron roofs.

An estimated 2,500 inhabitants were rendered homeless and their food supply threatened. Some 90% of the coconut trees were stripped of leaves and fruit.⁵³ The yams were wrenched out of the ground, leaving only the sweet potato crops. Altogether, it is difficult to imagine the severity of a cyclone which drastically reduces the food supply immediately and which prevents the inhabitants from rehousing themselves. Unless outside assistance can be organized, the inhabitants are forced to revert to cave shelters and be content with a simpler style of life.⁵⁴ All those adaptations which add to the quality of life in Star Harbour Region were destroyed overnight. The area is now culturally impoverished.

Relief for the area was organized from Honiara. Blankets, clothing, lamps, 600 bags of rice, 150 tins of ship's biscuits, tents and plastic sheeting were dispatched. Building materials and palm leaves for thatching were being collected in the Bauro area of San Cristobal to help in the rebuilding programme. Even with this help the local people face immense problems of reconstruction and survival. A large proportion of the material culture has to be replaced.⁵⁵ Gardens need to be replanted and new coconut trees planted.

The survey described what was present in the area before Cyclone Ursula struck and it covers an important cultural phase which we can now identify as Pre-Cyclone 1971. The Post Cyclone Ursula phase is one which ought to be studied

47. I heard about the cyclone after I had completed the first draft of this article.

48. Information is taken from *B.S.I.P. News Sheet*, No. 23, 1-15. December, 1971, and from correspondence received from Messrs. G. Dennis (21 February 1972) and G. Kuper (17 February 1972).

49. A Marine Department official saw dead fish 100 yards inland from the sea. The area looked "like the surface of the moon," he said (*B.S.I.P. News Sheet* 23).

50. An account of the destruction is described by Father Bruns of the Catholic Mission at Maniwowo in the *B.S.I.P. News Sheet*.

51. This information from Mr. G. Kuper.

52. G. Dennis reported that a temporary structure had been erected to protect the artifacts. An appeal for funds was launched in Honiara so that the two custom houses can be rebuilt.

53. Estimated by G. Dennis.

54. These details from *B.S.I.P. News Sheet*.

55. A large number of canoes was wrecked.

in great detail in order to discover how a Melanesian society literally rebuilds its environment and its culture after having faced a major disaster.⁵⁶ If history repeats itself the people of the area can be trusted to recover fairly quickly as was the case following a devastating series of earthquakes and a huge tidal wave just before Bernatzik (1935:5-6) visited the area in the 1931 to 1933 period. It could well be the case however, that acculturation has severely limited the self-help capacity of the local population to deal with disasters of this magnitude.

56. Tikopia, a Polynesian society, which is also part of the British Solomon Island Protectorate, faced a similar disaster (Firth, 1959).

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